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*Thomas Edwards*  
*Long Melford*

AN

# HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE *and* REIGN

OF

# DAVID

King of ISRAEL.

---

In FOUR BOOKS.

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Interspersed with Various  
CONJECTURES, DIGRESSIONS,  
*and* DISQUISITIONS.

In which (among other Things)  
Mr. BAYLE's Criticisms, upon the *Conduct* and *Character*  
of That PRINCE, are fully considered

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*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that  
bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not  
wither.*

*By Patrick Delaney* PSAL. I.

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By the Author of *Revelation examined with Candour.*

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In Two VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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The FOURTH EDITION.

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To his GRACE

W I L L I A M

DUKE of *Devonshire*,

Lord Lieutenant of IRELAND.

**I**F this work shall find as much favour with posterity, as it hath done with the present age, let it be no dishonour to the name of *Cavendish*, (if this

letter should live to inform them) that it was written in *Ireland*, under your Grace's government, and honoured with your patronage—A patronage, which, however distinguished by the advantages of high station, most noble birth, and a long line of illustrious ancestors, had yet neither been desirable to this author, nor sought by his friends, had it not been eminently distinguished by those virtues, which give birth and station their true dignity: clear, unfulled, unsuspected honour, in the patron's public character; and every amiable quality, in his private: conjugal fidelity and affection; paternal tenderness, exemplary humility, sincere and steady friendship, and extensive charity: and all these founded upon their only true and solid basis; True Religion.

MY LORD, it is the proper province of the annalist, and the historian, to do justice to your Grace, in your public capacity; to inform posterity, in how steady and uniform a tenour of honest zeal, and unaffected fortitude, you have ever asserted the distinguishing character of your noble family; Loyalty to your Sovereign, unsevered from the true love of Liberty and your Country. In a word, it is their business to tell, with what integrity you filled and adorned the greatest stations.

THESE are the duties of their province; and let them be their themes: but let me be allowed, for the interest of virtue, to mention one thing, which may not fall within their observation; to thank your Grace, in the name of

thousands, for your enlarged and iterated bounty to the poor of this city, in the day of their calamity; when frozen with cold, and famished with hunger, in the severest season this region ever felt, your liberality opened the way to the most generous charity that ever relieved so great a distress.

THESE, my Lord, are acts of goodness, which should be known, for the benefit of mankind, in the blessing of good example: and the more, because their authors are studious to conceal them; for they are the fruits of that truly christian virtue, which *vaunteth not herself*.

GOD be praised, my Lord, there are yet instances, in the highest stations, *of pure religion and undefiled before Him,*



*Him, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

MAY your Grace long enjoy all the blessings, that naturally and providentially await so amiable a character, and derive them to a late, and a numerous posterity! And may I be allowed to hope that it will be no disadvantage to you with them, that this address attends you, from a man who should be presumed superior to flattery, because he is understood to be above dependence; one who would not (if he knows himself) for any vanity of this world, disgrace *The Life of DAVID* with the imputation of one untruth prefixed to it; one, who, whilst he wishes to do honour to your name, has not the least ambition ei-

ther to distinguish, or perpetuate his own ; and therefore desires to be known to the world by no other than that of

*Your GRACE'S*

*Most dutiful, and*

*most obedient,*

*humble servant.*

July 22. 1740.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

*T*HE praises bestowed upon DAVID by sacred writers, and the calumnies heaped upon him by some others of a different denomination, strongly, and, I think, naturally, engaged my curiosity to search into his history, in order to satisfy myself in his real character. And as this search engaged me in an exact and particular inquiry into all parts of his life and conduct, I found them filled with a surprising series of rare incidents, and interesting events; and such as either supplied or suggested a great variety of curious observations and reflections, which I believed would neither be unpleasing nor unprofitable; and, for that reason, I soon determined to communicate them to the world. And I own, not without some  
hope

## X The PREFACE.

*hope of supplying even the light and libertine reader with matter of information and entertainment, if not of real improvement; and, at the same time, avoiding all imputation of offence and demerit with the serious, the learned, the reasonable, and the religious.*

*IN this work, I freely own, I served myself as well as I could, of all the learned (that came in my way) upon the subject; but without a servile adherence to their judgments or sentiments, and without tying myself down to the painful drudgery of retaining their particular opinions and observations. My business, I thought, was, to feast my reader, the best I could: if the entertainment was to his liking, (salutary, and not distasteful) I imagined he would be little solicitous about the purveyors (their names and characters) of the particular messes that made it up.*

*THERE is, perhaps, more vanity, than humility, in owning, that I am indebted,*



## The PREFACE xi

*debted, on this occasion, to all the commentators of note, more than I imagined I should at my first setting out; and more to a commentator of little note, than to almost all the rest put together; I mean Mr. Trap, of Weston in Gloucestershire. In short, there is but one work upon the subject (which yet treats it more professedly than any other which hath fallen in my way) to which I am not indebted for so much as one single hint, or one idea.*

*NOW, in truth, the history I am going to present to the reader, is not so properly the history of David, as the history of the divine Providence, during the life and reign of that prince, and within that scene of action. And this, methinks, is matter of refined and uncommon curiosity. Here the reader will see the prudence and passions of men, operating in their ordinary course, and producing their common effects; and, at the same time, the wisdom of GOD interposing, superintending, swaying, and conducting them*

## xii      The P R E F A C E.

*them all to the purposes of his adorable Providence.*

*HERE* he will see, not only the ordinary occurrences, revolutions, and events, which pass before a common eye, upon this stage of the world; but he will also behold the secret and unseen springs and movements, the whole machinery by which they are brought about: and from a careful observation, and right application of what he here learns, he will be able to contemplate the whole history of the world, the lives of the princes, and the revolutions of empires, in a very different light from that in which they present themselves to careless observers.

*AND*, what is yet of more importance, he will learn what degree of favour, support, and success, he himself is to hope for from the divine Providence, in the upright and conscientious discharge of his duty; and what chastisement, distress, and disappointment, he is to expect from a contrary conduct.

## The PREFACE xiii

*IF it please GOD, that such reflections made him wiser and better, his end will be answered, and so will mine.*

*LET me add this short request to the reader, That if he meet any incongruity or absurdity in the text, not consistent with common sense, he will be so good as to ascribe it to some overlooked error of the press; it being scarce possible to avoid all such.*

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T H E

The first part of the  
document is a list of names  
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amendment to the  
constitution.

The fifth part of the  
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copy of the  
minutes of the  
meeting of the  
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THE



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A N  
Historical ACCOUNT

Of the LIFE and REIGN of

King *D A V I D.*

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BOOK I.

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CHAP I.

*An Account of Saul's Rejection, and  
David's Designation to the Throne.*

**W**HEN the decree of divine rejection and deposition was passed upon *Saul*, for his deliberate and obstinate disobedience in relation to *Amalek*, *David* was, by a very express and particular designation of Almighty God, (such a designation as plainly shews its divine original) appointed to succeed him.

It will not be amiss to explain this matter a little more fully.

THE *Amalekites* were a people long since devoted to destruction by Almighty God, for one of the most notorious instances of cruelty, inhumanity, and impiety, that ever was heard of; *viz.* the invading and destroying, as far as in them lay, by treachery and surprize, an innocent people uninjured, and unprovoked.

WHOEVER is any way conversant in the Bible, will soon perceive, that by this people, I mean the

*Israelites*, when they were going out of *Egypt*, and were manifestly under the immediate and miraculous protection of Almighty God.

THIS was a sin at once so inhuman and so atheistical, as perhaps cannot be parallel'd in any one instance from the foundation of the world: and therefore it is no wonder, if this flagrant act of villainy and impiety (plainly indicating the last degree of previous depravity\*) produced that dreadful decree against them, recorded in *Deut.* xvii. 14. *I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven* †. And, soon after,

\* *Levit.* xx. ver. 17 to 23. inclusive:

† Mr. *Chubb* tells us, in his Pamphlet relating to *Doctor Rundle's Election*, &c. that this is not true in fact; seeing they remained long after, even till *Saul's* time, a distinct People.

Let us try the weight of this objection. — The *Amalekites* remained a distinct people till *Saul's* time; therefore God's decree of extirpation was not executed upon them. This is just such reasoning as if he had said, that *Adam* lived above 900 years after the sentence of death denounced against him; and therefore he never died. I allow, that a remnant of the *Amalekites* outlasted both *Saul* and *David*, and reached even to the reign of *Hezekiah*, 1 *Chron.* iv. 41. But at the same time, we learn from the last verses of that chapter, that *the sons of Simeon smote the rest of them that escaped*, (*i. e.* that escaped all the preceding attempts against them) *and dwelt there unto this day*.

But if we are to rest upon Mr. *Chubb's* peremptory assertion, they not only were not extirpated, but they continued unmolested, till the days of *Saul*. But this surely is a rash and ungrounded assertion; for they joined the *Moabites* and *Midianites* against *Israel*, *Num.* xxiv. 20. about 40 years after their first attempt. And I think there is no doubt but they were defeated with the *Midianites* (*Num.* xxxi.). There is also, I think, good reason to believe, that these inveterate enemies of *Israel* were included in the general confederacy against *Joshua*, and shared in their common defeat, *Josb.* xi. This is certain, that more than 40 years after this, they again joined the *Moabites* against *Israel* (*Judg.* iii.) And when the *Moabites* were defeated by *Ehud*, can it be made a doubt,



after, the reason and manner of effecting this are added in a subsequent declaration: the strict sense of which, in its most literal translation, stands thus;—*Because the hand against the throne of God, the war of God against Amalek from generation to generation; i. e. because Amalek hath lifted up his hand against the throne of GOD, hath set himself to defeat the divine determinations in favour of Israel; therefore GOD will have war with them from generation to generation, until they are utterly extirpated.*

doubt whether they shared in that defeat? Or if there could, *Deborah* and *Barak's Song* puts the point out of all doubt (v. 14.).

It is also certain, that about 150 years after this, they again joined the *Midianites* against *Israel*, (Judg. vi. & vii.) and were involved in their common destruction: and forasmuch as the Psalmist mentions them as the confederates of *Gebal* and *Ammon* against *Israel*, it is not improbable, that they shared in the defeat of *Ammon* by *Jephthah*, about 88 years after this. And from this period to the command given to *Saul* to extirpate them, passed about 80 years.

The learned authors of the *Universal History* observe, (p. 361. note P) that this was only a particular application of the general commands before given, (and which the *Jews* had bound themselves, and their posterity, by a solemn oath, to observe) to destroy all those nations that would not accept of proffered peace, and forsake their idolatry; and to eliminate all that belonged to them. And the exhortation of *Moses* to them, as far as it is applicable to this head, they thus paraphrase: “Remember “ therefore, that there is no redemption for them; and that if “ you suffer yourselves, either thro’ pity, or covetousness, to “ spare any of them, you will not only incur the punishment of “ perjury and rebellion, but be ensnared into greater guilt, by “ conforming to their ways. Had *Saul* been mindful of this, he “ had not saved the king of *Amalek*, and the choicest of the cat- “ tle and plunder (1 *Sam.* xv. 9, &c.). When therefore he “ made that weak and puerile excuse, that he designed the latter “ as an offering to God, *Samuel* did justly reprove him, by shew- “ ing him how vain it was to pretend to atone for one open “ violation of God’s command by another.”

To reconcile this severe decree to the principles of justice, and to GOD's own declarations, *Ezek. xviii.* of his limiting the vengeance of guilt to the person of the offender, we need only reflect upon one plain observation, which every day's experience sufficiently furnishes us with; that nothing is more common, than for children to appear unrepentant, and, it may be, improved and inveterate in the sins of their ancestors; and that nothing is more easy to the divine prescience, than to foresee this, and to pronounce upon it. And that this was the case of the *Amalekites*, sufficiently appears from their history. For as their fathers attempted upon the *Israelites*, when under the manifest protection of GOD; their sons continued to do the same upon every occasion, tho' the same protection became every day more and more conspicuous, by many and repeated instances.

How this decree had hitherto been put in execution by the people of GOD, and under his immediate direction, from age to age, will best be learned from the books of *Numbers*, *Joshua*, and *Judges*. And now *Saul*, as next in order, was appointed, was in a very solemn, express, and particular manner, commanded to execute his part. And to shew that the sins of those very *Amalekites* now commanded to be destroyed, were the real motives of their destruction; they are in that command given for it, expressly and emphatically called the *sinners* the *Amalekites*: and their king is charged by the prophet with the guilt of murders (and the *Kenites*, as less criminal, are commanded to be separated from them).

BUT



BUT we are asked, Why their innocent children should be put to death? To this it is very obvious to answer by another very plain question; Why do innocent children die every day? It was a mercy to the children of the *Amalekites* to be taken off in their innocence, before they were tainted with the infection of their fathers guilt\*.

AND to put it out of all doubt even with *Saul* himself, that the punishment and prevention of guilt were the only end and aim of that command; he was expressly enjoined to destroy not only the *Amalekites*, but all that they had, *ox and sheep, camel and ass*; that the memory of so vile a race might be blotted out from under heaven. A command admirably fitted to spread and to establish the terror of divine vengeance upon guilt over the earth, and, in consequence of that, to restrain the enormities of mankind. Whereas had the *Amalekites* been commanded to be destroyed, and their substance spared, avarice and interest might have justly been suspected as the real motives of this extirpation; and the divine command as a pretence only.

BESIDES all this; tho' *Saul* might not have enter'd rightly into the reason of the command,

\* We are told, that *Schah Abbas* extirpated the inhabitants of several villages in *Persia*, for their abominable wickedness (*Ambass. Travels*, l. 7. p. 294.). Nor have historians, as far as I can learn, charged this act upon him as cruel or tyrannous.—There is such a thing as the vulgar call *an ill breed*; and sins run in the blood. It is certainly a blessing to the world to have such a race rooted out. The infection of incorrigible guilt should be arrested at any rate; and if nothing but extremities can effect this, extremities are then sufficiently justified in the great Governor of the world; nay, they are manifestly required and exacted from him in that character. Men are tied down to other measures of acting.

nor been influenced either by duty or gratitude to a religious observance of it; yet one would think the example of *Achan*, so fresh in the history of his own nation. (*Josh. vii.*) who was destroyed, with his whole family, for a like instance of disobedience, might sufficiently have deterred him from slighting it.

WHEREAS then *Saul* did not only disobey this command, but acted in manifest opposition to the reason and end of it; sparing the murderous *Agag*, (in all probability, from the prospect of a rich ransom, or perhaps, a proud partiality to the regal character †) and all the spoil that was worth saving, and destroying only the refuse; yet was he so hardened in his stubborn disobedience, as obstinately to affirm to *Samuel's* face, that he had executed the divine command. And when that was confuted by the evidence of fact, he then had the hardiness to shift the blame from himself, and to shield his avarice under the shew of popular piety:—*The people* (said he to *Samuel*) *took of the spoil, the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord thy God in Gilgal.*

To this *Samuel* made that noble reply (1 *Sam. xv. 22.*): *And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.*

† An important lesson this to princes, that guilt subjects them to the severest strokes of the divine justice, as much as the meanest of their subjects,



WHEN this last heinous act of disobedience was added to *Saul's* other sins, GOD, by the mouth of his prophet, pronounced the decree of his deposal from the sovereignty; nor could *Samuel's* long and earnest intercession ever prevail to reverse it\*.

THIS was the state of things, when *Samuel* was expressly commanded by GOD, to fill his horn with oil, to go to *Bethlehem*, and there to anoint one of the sons of *Jesse* the *Bethlehemite* (whom GOD should then name to him) to succeed *Saul* in the kingdom.

THE prophet would gladly have excused himself from executing this dangerous commission, from the apprehension of *Saul's* hearing it, and revenging his deposition upon him. To remove his fears upon this head, GOD commands him to take an heifer, and to give out, that he was come thither to sacrifice to the LORD; which, as a prophet, he had a right to do where-ever he thought fit.

HE went accordingly, and was no sooner arrived at *Bethlehem*, but the people crouded about him, in dreadful apprehensions of his being sent to denounce some divine threat or vengeance for their sins †. But *Samuel* soon quieted their fears upon that head, and only let them know, that he was come to sacrifice to the LORD; and enjoined them to sanctify themselves for their attendance upon

\* It was possibly an additional aggravation of *Saul's* sin, that tho' he had so ill executed the divine command in relation to *Amalek*, yet he erected a trophy, (the vulgate hath it, a triumphal arch) as a monument of his victory over them. Possibly the first monument of the kind that ever was erected.

† Or perhaps, in apprehension of his having fled thither from *Saul's* wrath, and that they might suffer by sheltering him.

the altar (It seems some sanctification was then deemed necessary, to qualify persons for their fit attendance on the most solemn ordinance of religion \*): And when the sacrifice was over, he called *Jesse* and his sons to the feast, which always followed the sacrifice.

UPON the appearance of *Eliab* the first-born of *Jesse*, the prophet, struck with the gracefulness and dignity of his person, hastily concluded him the man appointed to the sovereignty by Almighty God. But this his human judgment (which probably was grounded upon the remembrance of a like graceful mien and presence in *Saul*) was quickly reprov'd; and he was given to understand, that GOD judgeth not, as man too often doth, by appearances, and seeming perfections, but by the secret and unseen powers and dispositions of the heart.

IMMEDIATELY six other sons of *Jesse* were ordered to pass in review before the prophet; but none of these had the divine approbation.

THE prophet, (as we may well imagine) sufficiently embarrassed at this suspense of the divine designation, asked *Jesse*, If he had no other son? To which he answered, That he had one more, his youngest, in the fields, keeping his flock. Upon which, the prophet immediately ordered him to be sent for; declaring that they must not sit down until he came. *Jesse* obeyed: and when *David*

\* Now, however ritual this sanctification might be, yet I believe it is not doubted but that it was intended as an emblem of that purer, and more spiritual sanctification, which should be required of all those who commemorate the great sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.



arrived, (for he was the youngest) GOD immediately ordered the prophet to arise and anoint him; for this was he.

ACCORDINGLY *Samuel* arose and anointed him; but whether *in* the midst of his brethren, *i. e.* in their presence; or whether *from* the midst of his brethren, *i. e.* apart, and in the presence only of *Jesse*, is not so clear from the text. Tho' the rudeness, with which they afterwards treated him, makes it more probable, that it was apart: unless we suppose that rudeness to have arisen from jealousy, as very possibly it might.

FROM this account it appears, 1st, That *Samuel* very unwillingly anointed another king in the life of *Saul*. 2dly, That, if he had been swayed by his own judgment, *Eliab* would have been the man. And 3dly, That if *Jesse's* judgment had prevailed, his seven other sons had been preferred to *David*. From all which it is evident, that the election of *David* to the throne of *Israel* was an immediate act of Providence, without the least intervention of human wisdom or contrivance.

How *David* came to be so little accounted of in the eye of a parent, as not to be thought worthy so much as to be called to the feast with his brethren, is not easy to say; unless it be, that as elder children take earlier and fuller possession of their parents affections; so, unless they forfeit them by some course of ill conduct, they seldom fail to retain some preference in them to the last.

HOWEVER, that *David* wanted no recommendation of personal advantages, is evident; for he was beautiful, and (what implies a great deal

deal more) amiable. The text tells us, *he was ruddy, and fair of eyes, and goodly to look to.* But, very probably, these advantages gave him little distinction, in a family where beauty seems to have been familiar and hereditary.

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## CHAP. II.

### *A Digression concerning Samuel, the Prophets, and their Schools.*

THE unscriptural reader may possibly have some curiosity to know who this extraordinary person might be, who was thus appointed to pull down, and to set up kings; and readers of another character will, I hope, indulge this short digression on that account.

SAMUEL was of the tribe of *Levi*, and of a very distinguished family among that tribe, that of the *Koathites*, descended from *Korah* the *gainsayer*, whose descendants were eminent for their musical skill in the service of the temple; and are by some commentators (probably for that reason) accounted prophets. His father *Elkanah* is believed by some men of learning to have been a prophet, and the son of a prophet (and his mother is numbered among the prophetesses); perhaps for no better reason than his having been of the city of *Ramathaim Zophim* \*, which is interpreted *Ramah of the prophets*; tho' in strict-

\* Supposed to be the *Arimathea* of the New Testament.



ness, it is *Ramah of the watchmen*, prophets being sometimes so styled in Scripture.

His father is believed to have been first marry'd to *Hannah* the mother of *Samuel*, whom he tenderly loved; but finding her barren, he (through that eager desire of issue which sway'd the *Jews*) took also another woman to wife, named *Peninnah*; who, finding herself sufficiently prolific, could not forbear upbraiding *Hannah* with her barrenness: and as *Elkanah* went up year by year to *Shiloh*, where the ark then resided, to offer sacrifice, *Peninnah* took the opportunity of the feast which ensued, to vex her with more than ordinary reproaches upon that head, in the face of her family and friends; and this she did one day to such a degree, that *Hannah*, rising from the feast, in which she could not share, poured out her complaints to God, and prayed and wept before him in extremity of anguish, beseeching him to bestow a son upon her, and vowing to dedicate him in a very distinguished manner to his service during his whole life\*.

God heard her petition, and she fulfilled her vow; for, waiting only till the child *Samuel* was weaned (that is, till he was three years old) and surmounting all the ties of tenderness, and foregoing all her female fears and fondness, she immediately conveyed him to the temple, and dedicated him in a most solemn manner, and with

\* The Levites in their ordinary course, were obliged only to attend the service of the temple in their turns from the age of twenty-five to fifty; — after which they became judges, and preachers of righteousness.

a noble hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving, to the service of GOD.

ELI the high-priest received him as became his piety; and the little *Samuel* ministered before him from that day forward, and was early and signally distinguished by the divine favour and influence, to the great and full satisfaction of all the people of *Israel*; insomuch that when *Eli* and his wicked sons perished, he succeeded to the supreme civil power over the whole nation, where he sustained the character of a most equitable and righteous ruler, and just judge; which last character he still sustained (even when GOD, for the sins of the *Israelites*, gave them a king) to his dying day.

THE particulars of *Saul's* election to the supreme power, and *Samuel's* divesting himself of it, are to be found at large in the first book of *Samuel*, and are, I think, not unworthy the curious reader's regard.

SAMUEL, now dispossessing himself of the supreme power, was however no way diminished in dignity, or in the desire of doing good; but continued revered alike both by prince and people. Part of his time he gave to the administration of public justice; and the rest he dedicated to the more immediate service of GOD, in a learned and religious retirement in one of the prophetic schools at *Ramah*, over which he presided. Of these men, and their schools, take this short account:

THE Jewish nation had no such schools or seminaries for the education of their children, as are now in use among us: with them, parents were

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in the place of tutors; and as they had no regard, or, to speak more properly, as they had great contempt for heathen literature, they contented themselves with teaching their children their own language and laws; upon full assurance, that a proper proficiency and skill in these would gain them all the credit and esteem they desired: and as their law-giver had taken sufficient care to inculcate this duty, nothing was more justly reputable amongst them, than a conscientious discharge of it. However, forasmuch as parents are not always the best qualified to the discharge of this duty, and a careful study and thorough knowledge of the scriptures was of such vast importance, at once to inform and inlarge their minds, and to preserve them in the purity of their religion, and keep them a distinct people, it pleased God to institute several orders of men for this purpose; of which the principal were the priests, Levites, and prophets.

THE business of the priests was, to minister in holy things, to teach the law in all its parts, to judge and to decide all controversies, and the Levites were their subalterns in all these offices. But as a great part of their time was taken up in their attendance upon the altar, and other rituals of the *Mosaic* law; and as it is natural for men to lay a great, perhaps too great a stress upon those things in which they themselves are greatly concerned and interested; it pleased God to raise up another order of men, to be a check upon the priests, and to be the guardians of the spiritual part of the law of *Moses*, as the priests were of the ceremonial; and



and this was the order of the prophets, a race of men trained up by a long course of study, discipline, strict temperance, and utter contempt of worldly grandeur, to be teachers of righteousness; and fitted, by the best habits of piety and virtue, to receive, upon extraordinary occasions, the inspirations of the Spirit of God.

THESE were to the Jews the great teachers of virtue and wisdom, as the philosophers were in some measure to the Heathens; but with great disadvantage, from their deficiency in the two last characters: whereas these advantages impowered and inspired the prophets to preach true righteousness to the people; and to depress the value of all the rituals of religion, compared with it; to preach and to prepare them for the kingdom of the *Messiah*; and to manifest their mission by miracles, and predictions of future events: which enabled them, on many occasions, to reprove and to repress alike the enormities of princes, priests, and people; nay, sometimes, to awe even neighbouring nations into repentance and amendment.

Now tho' God, to shew that the operations of his Spirit are not tied to human institutions, sometimes chose uneducated men, and even women, to receive and to publish his inspirations; yet at the same time, to manifest the value of wise discipline, and good institutions, and to shew their fitness to prepare men for the influence of the Spirit of God, he generally chose his prophets out of such as were educated in the schools of the prophets; of which take this short



short account, from a work of great learning, and (I think) equal candour \* :

“ ON the other hand, they were no less careful to cultivate the knowledge of them, (*the Scriptures*) among themselves. We cannot, indeed, be sure that they had any synagogues before the captivity; tho’ it be far from improbable, considering the great distance at which some of them lived from the temple; and that, at the best, they were obliged to resort thither but thrice in a year: but other places they had for prayer and instruction, namely, the schools of the prophets; to which they might repair on the sabbaths, new moons, and other festivals. By prophets, we mean not those strictly so called, men endowed with the spirit of prophecy; but their disciples, or, as the Hebrew idiom words it, the *sons* of the prophets. The former were generally consulted by the kings, priests, and elders of their people, upon all extraordinary occasions, whether about religion, or state affairs; and the latter were brought up under them, and fitted for instructing the people in the way of virtue, and the worship of God.

“ THESE had their habitations chiefly in the country; they lived in a kind of society among themselves, and had generally one or more of the prophets to be heads over them, and to whom they gave the title of father; their houses were but mean, and of their own building; their food was chiefly pottage made of

\* Universal Hist. p. 730, 731.

“ herbs,

“ herbs, unless when the people sent some better  
 “ fare to them, such as bread, parched corn, ho-  
 “ ney, dried fruits, and the like; their dress was  
 “ plain and coarse, and tied about with a lea-  
 “ thern girdle: their wants being so few, were  
 “ easily supplied by their own hands; and as  
 “ their views reached no further, so they limit-  
 “ ed their labour to that, that they might bestow  
 “ the more time in prayer, study, and retirement.  
 “ Riches were no temptation to them in such a  
 “ state; and therefore *Elijah* not only refused  
 “ *Naaman's* presents, but punished *Gebasi* in a  
 “ severe manner, for having clandestinely ob-  
 “ tained a small portion of them. This laborious,  
 “ recluse, and abstemious course of life, joined  
 “ to the meanness of dress, gave them such a  
 “ strange air, especially among the courtiers, that  
 “ they looked upon them as no better than mad-  
 “ men. Their extraordinary freedom in reprove-  
 “ ing even princes for their wicked deeds, did  
 “ likewise expose them frequently to persecu-  
 “ tions, imprisonments, and sometimes to death,  
 “ especially in the reigns of some wicked princes,  
 “ such as were *Abab* and *Manasseh*; but in the  
 “ main, they were always respected by the bet-  
 “ ter and wiser sort even of the highest rank,  
 “ and used with the utmost reverence and re-  
 “ gard both in language and behaviour.”

MANY learned men have thought, that in these  
 schools they have studied arithmetic and astro-  
 nomy; and doctor *Patrick* thinks, that the Greek  
 word *Sophos*, which was originally the title of  
 astronomers, might be derived from *Zoph*, which

in *Hebrew* signifies a Prophet. Nor is this an irrational conjecture; especially when we consider that the prophets generally fixed their residence upon the tops of hills, where, if they studied not astronomy, yet were they always at hand to preach a better knowledge of heaven to the people that delighted to sacrifice on high places.

ONE thing we certainly know, that in these schools they studied and practised music in great perfection; and as the praises of GOD made a considerable part of their business, it is not to be imagined that their music was without song.

To conclude: “ Here (says the learned Dr. *Trapp*) was professed the true philosophy; which, according to *Aristotle*, is a divine and heavenly doctrine indeed\*; far different from that vain and deceitful philosophy which the apostle inveigheth against, (*Col. ii. 8.*) and which is in truth nothing but sophistry; which *Aristotle* calls a seeming, but not a substantial wisdom †.”

OF this order of men was *Samuel*, an eminent prophet and patriot! a prophet, and the son and father of prophets! the child of piety and prayers, and the man of GOD!

\* Θεόν και δαιμόνιον ὄντως χρῆμα.

† Φαινομένη σοφία, ἔσα δὲ μή.



## C H A P. III.

*What ensued upon DAVID's being anointed to the Succession of the Throne, together with the Occasion of his being called to SAUL's Court.*

DAVID, elected and anointed to the throne \*, in the manner already mentioned, became, from that day, eminent for fortitude, prudence, and piety, beyond any man of his own, or perhaps of any succeeding age. It is true, they that credit the scripture-history in this affair, will easily account for all these extraordinary accomplishments and improvements; for that assures us, that *the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward* †. And I should be glad to learn from those who do not credit this circumstance of the history, in the strict sense of the text, how otherwise they

\* It is hardly to be supposed, (say the authors of the *Universal History*, p. 763, note E) that *Samuel* did then explain the whole mystery of his anointing of *David*; which might have had some fatal consequence, had it come to *Saul's* ears; but as it was usual to anoint men to the office of prophet, as well as to the regal dignity, it is more likely, that he left them to suppose the former.

† Tho' his outward circumstances were not changed in the mean time, (for he continued keeping his father's flock) yet the anointing was not an empty ceremony: a divine power went along with the instituted sign, and he found himself inwardly advanced in wisdom, courage, concern for the public, and all qualifications proper for a prince; to satisfy him that his election was of God, *Millar's Hist. of the Church*, &c. p. 146.



can account for those extraordinary effects and endowments, which immediately ensued *David's* designation to the throne.

I SHOULD be glad to learn from these gentlemen, how a designation to empire, which, in its ordinary course, is too apt to corrupt, debase and overset with vanity, should raise an obscure youth, uneducated, and little accounted of, even in the esteem of a parent's partiality, in an obscure age and country, without the advantage either of instruction or example, into the greatest musician, the noblest poet, and the most consummate hero of all antiquity; for that *David* was all these, and more than these, will, I hope, be one day out of all doubt with the candid reader.

IN the mean time, until they explain, it is not, I think, unreasonable to hope, that the candid reader will believe.

WHEN *Samuel's* important business at *Bethlehem* was over, he returned again to his usual residence at *Ramah*, and *David* to his flock; where his great abilities and endowments quickly became so conspicuous, that they recommended him in a very distinguished manner to the service of *Saul*, whose mind now became disturbed by all the black and malignant passions, without any reason, that we know of, but that which the text tells us, that *the Spirit of the Lord was now departed from him, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him*\*.

W H E-

\* *Josephus* relates, that he sometimes became like a demoniac. He having forsaken God, and his duty, (says Mr. *Millar*, *ibid.*)

WHETHER any more be meant by this, than that GOD, for *Saul's* hardened impenitence, withdrew his restraining and guiding grace, and left him a prey to his own passions, I cannot take upon me to say. This only I am sure of, that no man living needs a heavier chastisement from Almighty GOD, than the letting his own passions loose upon him: the consequence to the mind, I apprehend, would, in that case, be much the same, as it would be to the body, if the restraining pressure of the air were removed, and all the muscles, vessels and humours, left to the full freedom of their own powers and tendencies.

ON the other hand, I cannot see upon what principles of reason, religion, or philosophy, we should take upon us absolutely to preclude the agency of evil spirits in this case; or why GOD should be any more restrained in the use of their powers, on this or the like occasions, than in those of bears, lions, scorpions, or noxious animals of any kind; some of which, we know, he hath employed for chastising or restraining the enormities of his creatures. And besides there is this presumption in favour of this latter opinion, that *Saul's* physicians, who knew their own business best, and could best judge, whether the disorder of his mind lay within their province, or without it, expressly ascribe it to the agency now mentioned (1 *Sam.* xvi. 15.): *Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth*

the Lord, in his righteous judgments, withdrew from him those assistances of the good Spirit, which formerly fitted him for the government.

*thee.*

*thee.* They then proceed to prescribe in the following manner; *Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on an harp, and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.*

COMMENTATORS, who ascribe this disorder to natural causes, abound with learned reasonings and quotations, to prove the power of music in cases of this kind; and particularly urge that proof from *Seneca*, (*de Ira*, l. iii. c. 9.) that *Pythagoras quieted the perturbations of the mind with an harp*\*. And, possibly, so he might: but as we are not told whence those perturbations proceeded, his having done so, no way affects the question before us. All that we know of, is, that we have reason to believe, from the example of *Elisha*, *2 Kings* iii. (nor will the best philosophy forbid us) that quieting the perturbations of the mind, is absolutely necessary towards receiving the sacred influence of the Spirit of God. And if so, then may we fairly conclude that the same state of mind which fits us for the influence of good spirits, as naturally unfits us for the influence of such as are evil: and therefore the same power of music which quieted *Elisha's* rage and indignation against the

\* *Pythagoras perturbationes animi lyra componebat.*

*Thuanus* tells us, (tom. 3. *Buckley's* edit. l. 57. sect. 19.) that, after the *Parisian* massacre, *Charles* the ninth was wont to have his sleep disturbed by nightly horrors, and was composed to rest by a symphony of singing-boys.



idolatrous *Jehoram*\*, and fitted him for the agency of the Holy Spirit of GOD, might, for the same reason, by quieting *Saul's* unruly passions, unfit him for the agency of the evil spirit which troubled him; and, of consequence, work his cure for that time. And accordingly we are assured by the sacred historian, that *David* was recommended to *Saul*, on this occasion, by one of his servants, to play before him; that he was sent for accordingly; that his father immediately dispatched him with a small present of bread and wine to the king; and that his music had the desired effect. And if we suppose *Josephus's* account of this matter to be true, that *David* added songs and hymns to the harmony of his harp, (hymns that repressed the suggestions of the evil spirit) what is it which the united power of such music, and such poetry, might not effect †? And that he did so, is, I think, more, than probable; first because he excelled both in voice and poetry; and it was natural he should, on this occasion, exert his talents; secondly, because he could not but know, that such united accomplishments would at once more endear him to *Saul*, and be more effectual to his amendment; and, thirdly, because this was the known subsequent practice and praise of all the celebrated bards of antiquity. Nor have I the least doubt, but that the distinguished honours paid in after-

\* That the prophet was in a rage against him, appears evidently from his answer, *Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and the prophets of thy mother.*

† *Xenocrates*, we are told, cured madness by the harmony of verse. *Alexander ab Alexandro, Gemal. lib. 2. cap. 17.*

ages to those who excelled on the harp, added to those high and known epithets of *divine, inspired by God, and honoured by the people*, were derived from the tradition of *David's* inspiration, and the honours heaped upon him both by Almighty God, and the whole realm of *Israel*.

THIS best accounts for *Homer's*\* seating the divine *Demodocus* (introduced by an herald) on a silver studded throne, in the most honourable part of the assembly, and at a single and separate table, like an eastern prince; and at another time placing him (in the middle of the assembly) as the *Israelites* did *Eli* the high-priest in the height of his dignity, and the kings of *Judah* at their inauguration, (*2 Kings* xi. 14) on a seat against a pillar §; and crowning all with the appellation of the hero *Demodocus* †; honours utterly

\* It appears from Sir *Isaac Newton's Chronology*, that *Homer* flourished about one hundred and fifty years after *David*; and that the *Phœnicians*, who fled from *Zidon* and from *David*, under *Cadmus*, *Phœnix*, &c. carried letters, music, and poetry, into *Greece*. These men could not but know the true character of their conqueror; and letters being then in use, it was easy to derive it to their posterity, tho' their hatred of him might make them conceal or change his name.

§ *Joash* also, when declared king, stood by a pillar, as the *warrior* was, says the text.

† - - - - - Δῖον ᾄοιδόν  
 Δημόδοκον - - - λαοῖσι τελέμενον - - -  
 Κίρην δ' ἐΐφυθεν ἦλθεν ἄγων ἐέληεν ᾄοιδόν.  
 - - - - -  
 Τῷ δ' ἄρα Ποντόνοος θῆκε θρόνον ἀρσυεήλων  
 Μίω δ' αὖ τυμένω - - - - -  
 - - - - -  
 - - - - - παρ' διαίθει - - - - - τρέπεζαν  
 - - - - -  
 - - - - - πολυμήτις Ὀδυσσεύς

terly absurd and unaccountable, even in this age of musical idolatry, upon any other than the foregoing supposition.

As the recommendation now made to *Saul of David*, is very remarkable, the reader will not, I hope, be displeas'd to dwell a little upon it: *Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.*

HERE we see to what a height of reputation *David's* endowments had rais'd him, even in his retirement, from the time that *the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*: his fame grew, as *Horace* tells us that of *Marcellus* did, like a tree long hid in the shade, which was at full growth as soon as it was seen. And that there was something very extraordinary in the endowments of *David*, appears evidently from the last clause of this recommendation, *And the Lord is with him*: plainly implying, that he was highly favoured, and eminently protected, by Almighty GOD.

IN

Νῶτα δὲ πεπραμὸν . . . . .  
 Πᾶσι δ' ἀνθρώποισι ἐπιχθονίῳ ἄνδρι  
 Τυφίῳ ἑμμοεσι εἰσὶ καὶ αἰδῆς . . . . .  
 Ἡρώϊ Διμοδῶκῳ . . . . . ὈΜΗ'Ρ, Ὀδύσ. Θ':

*As there Demodocus, the bard of fame,  
 Taught by the Gods to please.* B. 8. v. 40.

*The*



IN the next place, we may observe the artful address of this recommendation, which points out *David*, tho' yet a youth, as now in his prime both of valour and prudence. And to account for this, the reader is to know, that valour and strength were the first and most advantageous recommendations to the favour of *Saul*, who (like some princes of our age) piqued himself upon bringing men of that character into his service (1 *Sam.* xiv. 5.): *And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.*

IN the next place, *Saul*, we know, was troubled with an evil spirit, under whose influence he was, doubtless, guilty of many and great extravagancies, it was not fit that a raw giddy youth should be witness to these; and therefore *David* is recommended as a prudent and a valiant man: as a man of prudence, he was fitter to be trusted with the secret of *Saul's* extravagancies in his fits; and as a valiant man, he was more likely to bear with the infirmities of

*The herald now arrives, and guides along  
The sacred master of celestial song.* v. 55--6.

*High on a radiant throne, sublime in state,  
Incircled by huge multitudes he sate:* v. 61--2.  
*With silver shone the throne.*

*Before his seat a polish'd table shines.* v. 65.  
*Then, from the chine, Ulysses carves with art  
Delicious food, an honorary part.* v. 520.

*Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,  
Who sacrea honours to the bard denies?* v. 524.

POPE'S *Odyss.*  
a brave

a brave man, as *Saul* was; and therefore the occasion required, that not only his character, but his age also, should now be raised as much as possible, Nor did *David* belye the recommendation made of him; for the sacred historian assures us, that he not only approved, but endeared himself to *Saul*, and was made his armour-bearer.

THUS was *David* called to court, and a commerce with the world; and gradually prepared and fitted for the great part he was to act in it, by the pure appointment of the Divine Providence, without any forecast or contrivance either of his own, or of his friends.

How long *David* continued at court, and when and why he returned to his father, and his flock, is no-where told us. His situation with *Saul* seems not altogether so well fitted for the views of a great genius. Doubtless, he found himself formed for great things; and, possibly, with all his humility about him, he was not long satisfied with his condition and character; and preferred, in *Cæsar's* way of thinking, to be first among the shepherds, than last, or even low, in *Saul's* train. Or, possibly, *Saul's* favour (for he was sufficiently inconstant) might have abated with his distemper; and therefore, when he found himself tolerably recovered, and his thoughts were wholly taken up with preparations for the *Philistine* war, *Jesse* might easily have redeemed *David's* attendance, by substituting three other sons in the service of *Saul*\*.

BUT

\* From the text it should seem, that *David* was but a very little time at court; no longer than *Saul's* sickness required: for we are

BUT whatever the occasion of his leaving the court might be it is evident, it was not without the special appointment of Providence; whose purposes required that when *David* should next make his appearance there, it should be under a more advantageous character than that of the most excellent musician; which soon after came to pass.

## C H A P. IV.

DAVID'S *Duel with GOLIAH.*

**H**OW long *David* had now been returned to his father, and his flock, when the *Philistine* war broke out, can no-where be clearly collected; but I think it pretty evident, that he returned, upon his father's sending his three eldest sons into the service of *Saul*: for when we are told, that *David* was the youngest son, and the three eldest followed *Saul*, the sacred historian immediately subjoins, *But David went and re-*

are told, (1 *Sam.* xvi. 23.) that *when the spirit from GOD was upon Saul, David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.* And then immediately follows the account of the assembling of the *Philistine* forces; before which it appears, that *David* had, for some time, being returned to his father; but when, or why, is not said: probably, when *Saul* was well, he was glad to get rid of his physician as fast as he could; not caring to be any more put in mind of his distemper, or his cure; and, if so, *David* only remained at court till the king recovered.



turned from Saul\* to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

THE occasion of this war is unknown: probably, the *Philistines* were tempted to engage in it by the fame of *Saul's* lunacy which would leave him ill able to conduct it to advantage.

As little are we informed of the continuance of this war; tho' I think we may fix the æra of the *Philistine* champion's challenge in the very beginning of it: we are only told, that when *David* was directed by his father to go to the camp of *Saul*, with some necessary provisions for his brethren, and a present of ten cheeses for the captain of their thousand, he rose up early in the morning and left his flock with a keeper, and took and went as *Jesse* had commanded him, and came to the camp just as both armies were going to engage: *He came to the trench*, says the text, *as the host was going forth to fight, and shouted*

\* The words of the original are very remarkable; *But David going and returning from above Saul*: this is best explained by what *Josephus* tells us, (lib. 6. c. 8. of his *Antiq.*) that the physicians advised him to get a man to stand over his head, (viz as he lay in bed) and play, &c. This also explains *Saul's* message to *Jesse*, when he sent for *David* a second time, (1 *Sam.* xvi. 22.) *Let David, I pray thee, stand before me*; in the letter of the original, *at my face*. In this situation if he saw *David's* face, he could only see it foreshortened, and the harp might wholly hide both his face and person.

From this text of *David's* going and returning from *Saul*, and the account of *Saul's* sending for him a second time, I think it evident, that *David* never went to court, but when *Saul's* illness called him thither, and that he returned to his flock as soon as that was over; which is further confirmed by what we are told (1 *Sam.* xviii. 2.) that, after the death of *Goliath*, *Saul* took him (*David*, on that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

for the battle. This sound soon inflamed his manly spirit with more than common ardour, to see, and to share in, the engagement. He left his carriage in the care of the officer who guarded the baggage, and ran into the army, and saluted his brethren; and as he talked with them, (both armies being now drawn up in battle array) the *Philistine* champion, *Goliath of Gath*, who, it seems, had now braved the *Israelite* army for forty days together, stepp'd out, as usual, to urge his challenge; which he did with a loud and terrible voice, the tenor of which was as follows:

THAT, to spare the effusion of human blood, they should decline a general engagement, and leave the decision of their quarrel to the valour of a single champion chosen on each side, whose defeat, or victory, should determine that of his country, who were to follow his fate:—*If, says he, your man be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us:* concluding all with a bold defiance of the *Israelite* army, and demand of an antagonist.

THE challenge was plausible; but, however seemingly founded upon fortitude and humanity, was not in reality the effect of either. The case was thus: The *Philistines* had one man amongst them of a very singular make and character; his stature was gigantic, and his strength proportionable; he was nine feet nine inches high\*, and

\* *Pliny* tells us, that a man of that stature was brought from *Arabia* to *Rome*, in the reign of *Claudius*, l. 7. c. 16. where he mentions

and his very arms and armour were more than a load for another man. He is generally believed to be a *Philistine* nobleman, and, as a mark of dignity, an armour-bearer carried his shield before him; a distinction which *Alexander* the Great \*, and other antient heroes, always affected. It is no wonder then, if the *Philistines* confided more in the strength and prowess of this man, than in that of their mercenary forces, which were their chief strength; and therefore chose rather to rest their cause upon his single arm, than the issue of a general engagement.

BESIDES all this, they well knew, that such a challenge, from such a man, was admirably fitted to strike a general terror into the adverse army, inasmuch as it could not fail to make an impression of fear upon the breast of every single man in it. If then the *Israelites* accepted the challenge, the *Philistines* were assured of conquest; if they declined it, it must be from the impression of an universal fear, which would better open their way to victory in a general engagement.

IN this distress *David* found the forces of his country; *Saul* and all *Israel* mightily dismayed, not daring so much as to stand the terror of the *Philistine's* presence, but retiring to their trenches as he approached; and here, as it was natural,

mentions the remains of other men of much greater dimensions.

\* *Arrian* tells us, (l. 6. p. 244. edit. Gronov.) that *Alexander* had the shield taken out of the temple of *Trojan Pallas*, carried before him in all his battles.

their



their conversation wholly turned upon this champion, and the reward offered by the king to any one that should slay him in combat; no less than the freedom of his family, added to great riches, and the honour of the king's alliance by marriage with one of his daughters; asking one another, (as the manner of men is, who could think of nothing else) Had they seen him; and telling one another, (what every one of them knew) what reward should be given to the man that subdued him.

DAVID listened to their accounts, and mixed in their inquiries with an eager curiosity, expressing, at the same time, some degree of wonder, that no one had yet accepted the challenge: *What shall be done, says he, to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? And again; For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?* The workings of *David's* modesty and valour are finely painted in these questions: his modesty would not suffer him directly and openly to accept the challenge, and profess himself *Goliath's* antagonist; and yet the fortitude of his own beating breast, and the glory of the undertaking, left him wholly at a loss why others should decline it. His eldest brother, *Eliab*, observed his ardour, and was offended at it: he, who knew *David's* spirit, soon saw his design; and, filled with indignation, lest *David* should atchieve what he himself had not dared to undertake, he reproved him with the most taunting questions, Why he left  
his

his flock? And what he had to do there? upbraiding him, at the same time, that nothing but vanity, and a vicious curiosity, had drawn him thither: tho', without doubt, he was well acquainted with his true errand. To all this, *David* (who found his indignation rising, but would not allow himself to indulge it against his elder brother) made no other reply, than by asking his brother, What he had done to offend him? and whether the greatness of the occasion did not justify all the questions he could ask about it? Then, turning to somebody else, he renewed his inquiries; and, stung with double indignation, at the ill treatment of his brother, and the insolence of the *Philistine*, he broke out into such open declarations of accepting the challenge, as were quickly brought before *Saul*; and, being called and examined in his presence, continued undaunted in his resolution.

SAUL endeavoured to dissuade him from so rash and desperate an attempt, by a remonstrance of his youth, and *Goliath's* confirmed strength, and experienced valour; but to no purpose. *David* defended his design, by relation of his success against enemies full as dangerous as *Goliath*.

THERE is an united dignity and humility in the relation, which no words but his own can come up to:—*Thy servant*, said he, *kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and, when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote*

*smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.*

HERE we see, that *David's* confidence of success is founded on *Goliath's* blasphemy, which had debased him to a brute; and therefore he now carried no more terror with him, than a lion or a bear.

THERE is nothing more offensive and shocking to the human ear, than self-praise; inasmuch as it is ordinarily the effect of two very offensive and unlovely passions, self-love, and intemperate vanity: and yet, when it is extorted, as it was here, I know nothing more becoming, or more noble. It is then adorned with all the dignity of self-defence, under the falsest imputation of the heaviest guilt. And yet *David's* temperance and modesty are remarkable even here: he describes his combat with the lion, in the shortest and simplest narration that ever was made of such a combat;—*I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him:*—and, to avoid the tedium of dwelling upon his own exploits, says no more of his combat with the bear, but barely that he *slew him.*

AND, as if even this were too much, he concludes all in the style of a man who had rather escaped than conquered:—*The Lord, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* Upon which, *Saul*, struck with the steadiness of his resolution



grounded upon so just and noble a confidence, immediately cried out; *Go, and the Lord be with thee!*

AND now his care was, to see his champion properly provided with arms offensive and defensive; and accordingly he put his own armour upon him, an helmet of brass, and a coat of mail. And when *David* had girded his sword upon his armour, and assayed to go, he found himself encumbered and embarrassed by a warlike apparatus, to which he was unaccustomed; and therefore, desiring to be excused from making use of them, he put them off; and, taking his staff in his hand, he choose five smooth stones out of the brook which divided the hostile armies, and put them in his shepherd's scrip; and so, taking his sling in one hand, and his staff in the other, he advanced towards his adversary. Nor was *Goliath* less forward; for he also advanced to the combat with his armour-bearer before him. But when upon a nearer approach to *David*, he discerned his youth and beauty, he disdained the effeminacy of his aspect; and, filled with indignation to find himself so contemptuously paired, and assaulted, like a dog, with stones and a staff, he vented his rage in reproaches and execrations, devoting his adversary to the wrath and vengeance of his gods; and then, calling aloud to him, bid him advance, that he might give his flesh to the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. To these taunts and threats *David* only made this answer; *Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield;*

a shield ; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. And then, inspired with a clear foresight of that just vengeance which this blasphemy would draw down both upon him, and upon those that abetted him, he adds; *This, day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand\** ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth : that all the earth may know, that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear : for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

So saying, he sprung forward with a noble alacrity to meet his antagonist ; and, putting his hand into his bag, took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk in his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

THIS done, he ran up to his prostrate enemy, and, standing upon him, drew out his own sword, (for *David* had none) and cut off his head.

\* The difference between these threats is remarkable. *Goliath*, in full confidence of his own strength, bids *David* come up, and I will give thy flesh, &c. *David*, confiding only in the protection of Providence, retorts ; *This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand* ; and then tells him what he is to expect.

## C H A P. V.

*The Friendship of David and Jonathan. Some Difficulties in the sacred Text cleared. David's Combat compared with that of Dioxippus the Athenian Athlete.*

THE *Philistines*, struck with a sudden consternation upon the defeat and death of their champion, fled; and the *Israelites*, giving a great shout of joy, pursued them with a dreadful slaughter, to the gates of *Gath* and *Ekron*\*, their fenced cities; and then returning, took the spoil of their camp.

WHEN *David* returned from the slaughter of the *Philistines*, *Abner* the king's general presented him to *Saul* with *Goliath's* head in his hand. What reception *Saul* gave him, or what conversation *David* had with him on that occasion, we know not: but we have reason to believe, that his speech was agreeable to his preceding conduct, short and humble, giving GOD the glory. All that we are told, is, that *Saul* inquired whose son he was; and that, when their conversation was ended, *Jonathan*, the king's eldest son, conceived the tenderest and strongest affection for him from that moment.

THERE is an inexpressible dignity in the silence of the Scriptures on this and such-like

\* The residences of two of the five *Philistine* lords.

occasions.



occasions. Minute description would bring them too near the level of common history; and, on occasions so very extraordinary, would, with all the strictness of truth, debase them even to an air of romance; whereas, in the present management, the writer's end is fully answered, by a short account of the effects of this conversation upon the heart of a pious, an intelligent, and heroic youth. We now behold this part of the sacred history in more than all the dignity of a noble portrait; in which *David*, bending to his prince, and laying the head of his fiercest foe at his feet, appears in the fairest light, and noblest attitude, that ever youthful hero was drawn in. Hard indeed would it be, to paint out the congenial joy, the glowing gladness of *Jonathan's* generous heart, upon the success of so much piety and virtue; and as hard, perhaps, to shew the secret workings of *Saul's* growing envy, under all the outward semblance of complacence and applause.---Sure I am, the subject hath both dignity and difficulty enough to exercise and perhaps to exhaust the skill of the noblest artist that ever adorned the profession.

BUT, however that may be, the friendship of *David* and *Jonathan*, so suddenly conceived, and so strongly cemented from that moment, is matter of just admiration with all thinking men, and seems to have something in it far transcending the ordinary course of human affections; or, to speak more plainly, seems to have been very peculiarly appointed and raised

by Providence, for the preservation of *David*\*.

ONE circumstance of this friendship ought not, I think, to be omitted; and that is, that, when *Jonathan* and *David* made a covenant, *Jonathan* stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to *David*, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. Whether this might not have given rise to that custom which hath obtained among the eastern mona chs, of presenting swords or vests, as marks of favour and esteem, is submitted to the reader.

BUT it is time we now return to clear some difficulties that have embarassed this part of the sacred text.

WHEN *David* was recommended to *Saul*, he was recommended as a man prudent and valiant; whereas, when he was going against *Goliath*, some years after, he is called, in the sacred text, a *youth*, and a *stripling*.

I ANSWER: That the first part of this objection hath been already removed, by shewing, that altho' *David* was then very young, yet the occasion required, that his age and character should then be raised as much as possible (*See* p. 25, 26,): whereas, both when he was going against a giant, and returning from the conquest, nothing was more natural, than to depress both,

\* This friendship is thus set forth in the sacred text: *The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.* And again: *Jonathan and David made (or, as it is in the Hebrew, cut) a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.*

as much as possible: the first, in order to dissuade him from so desperate an attempt; on the success of which, not only his own safety, but also the safety and honour of his country depended: and the second was as natural, when he had succeeded, to raise the glory of his conquest, by the opposition of his youth to *Goliath's* established strength; in comparison of whom, he was, in truth, but a stripling. So that the words *youth* and *stripling* are here comparative terms. *David* had now, in all probability, not exceeded his twenty-second year; and we know it is common, in our language, to call persons of that age boys and children, when compared with men of more years and experience; and it is evident from the text, that *Goliath* himself considered him in the same light.

THERE is yet another difficulty, seemingly greater. When *David* returned from the slaughter of the *Philistine*, *Saul* inquired who he was; which implied he knew him not; and *Abner* could not tell him. This seems strange, considering *David* had been, if not long, yet lately at court, and was in a good degree of favour with *Saul*. But, after all, the difficulty is not very great: *Abner* might have been absent from court all the time of *David's* being there; or, if he were present, might have little relish for *David's* music; and, consequently, taken little notice of him. Besides, *David* had now been absent from court for a year or two; and they that are acquainted with courts, will be little surpris'd, to find men forgotten there by a first



minister in less time, who were more considerable than *David*, under the character of a good harper, or of *Saul's* armour-bearer; an employment, however, which he never exercised.

BESIDES all this, one or two years growth of *David's* beard and stature\*, added to the influence of the weather upon his complexion, and the roughness of his shepherd's habit, might make a considerable change in his person and appearance and sufficiently disguise him to a man less disturbed in his understanding than *Saul*; who possibly had seldom seen him, or only when he was disturbed †; and, in all probability, his memory was much impaired by these disturbances, as it ordinarily is by all fits; or, if it were not, it is well known that the great often affect to forget persons of meaner condition, especially those to whom they owe obligations not very desirable to be remembered.

And yet, after all, *Saul* might have recollected *David's* person, and not his parentage, for any thing, that appears in the text; for he asked not who he was, but whose son he was; and, surely, nothing was more natural, than to inquire of what family that young man was, to whom he had conditionally affianced his daughter.

\* When first he was recommended to *Saul* as a valiant man, he had then, probably, attained to the ordinary size of men, which is not uncommon at eighteen: he was now tall enough to be fitted by *Saul's* armour, and we know *Saul's* size exceeded; this might make a considerable change in his appearance, tho' still in the bloom of youth.

† See the note p. 28.

As there is something very remarkable both in the manner and the event of *David's* combat with *Goliath*, I hope I shall be forgiven, if I shut up this head with a short relation of a like combat recorded by *Curtius* (l. 9. c. 7.); and the only one (except that of the *Epean* and *Ætolian*, mentioned by *Strabo* \*) I know of, in all the accounts of antiquity, that hath any resemblance to it.

DIOXIPPUS the *Athenian* †, in high favour with *Alexander the Great*, for his strength and dexterity at all the athletic exercises, was challenged by *Horratas*, a *Macedonian*, to single combat. He accepted the challenge with sufficient contempt; and, to shew it, appeared at the place appointed, naked, anointed, and crowned as a conqueror in the *Olympic* games, with only a small purple mantle wrapped round his left hand, and a knotty club in his right. *Horratas* came to the field of battle in complete armour, with a shield and sword, a lance in his right-hand, and a spear in his left; and began the fight by darting his lance at his adversary; which he, by a little bent of his body, easily declined; and, before *Horratas* could shift his spear

\* Lib. 1. p. 548. edit. *Amstelod.* apud *J. Wolters*, 1707.

† This was he, on whom *Diogenes* (as *Ælian* tells us, l. 12. c. 58.) passed that remarkable sarcasm: As he entered into *Athens* in the triumphal manner of the *Olympic* conquerors, and was gazed upon by the people in great crowds, he happened to cast his eyes upon a young lady of distinguished beauty; and, falling suddenly and violently in love, fixed them upon her till he passed by, and then, turning back his head, kept them still fixed upon her: which *Diogenes* observing, cried out to the *Athenians*, See here your great champion! See how a young girl hath swifted his neck!

into his right hand, broke it to pieces by a blow of his club. *Horratas* then attempted to draw his sword; but, before that could be effected, *Dioxippus*, with a joint-effort of his head and foot, at once knock'd up his heels, and beat him to the earth; then, catching up his sword, and putting his foot upon his neck, stood over him with his up-lifted club, ready, with one blow, to beat out his brains, until *Alexander* interposed to save his life.

THIS is a strong instance of the triumph of skill and activity over the completest armature; and I hope the singularity of the adventure will, with the curious reader, compensate for the length of the digression. I now resume the thread of my history.

THE unscriptural reader may, possibly, have some curiosity to know how *David* disposed of *Goliath's* spoils; at least, may not take it amiss, to be informed, that his armour was first deposited in *David's* tent; that is, either the tent belonging to his brethren, or some other now erected for his use; possibly, that of *Goliath*, taken in spoiling the *Philistine* camp. His sword was hung up, as a trophy of thanksgiving to God, in the tabernacle\*; and his head conveyed to *Jerusalem*, then in the possession of the *Israelites*; tho' the strong fort of *Sion* still held out for the *Jebusites*.

AND, possibly, one end of carrying it thither might be, to strike a terror into that garison;

\* Possibly from hence came that custom among the antient *Greeks* or *Romans*, of depositing their arms in their temples.



tho' it was, more probably, deposited there, in a prophetic foresight of that city's becoming one day the capital of *David*. And, if I may be indulged in a conjecture, I own, to me it seems not impossible, that all the histories we have of heads found in the foundations of cities, which afterwards became great and eminent, such as those of *Rome* and *Carthage*, might be derived from some imperfect or designedly obscured tradition of the history of this head.

NOR will the reader, perhaps, think this a very strained conjecture, who considers the great and allowed uncertainties in the accounts of the *Roman* originals, that, when the best *Roman* historians wrote \*, there were no records of almost the first four hundred years of their city extant; being all consumed (if they had any) in the burning of the city by the *Gauls*, *A. U. C.* 363. and therefore their study was, to make its origin as strange and stupendous as they could devise it; and, in order to do so, they crowded into that, the most extraordinary accounts of other countries †.

\* Their first historian, *Quintus Fabius Pictor*, was 160 years later than this period; he flourished about twenty or thirty years after the translation of the Septuagint, and took most of his accounts from *Diocles Peparethicus*, a *Greek*. Whether the history of the capitol be so old, I cannot say; but it is evidently later than the version of the *LXX*.

† This might be illustrated by many examples: I shall instance only in one: Whoever compares the account of the *Roman* beginning, consisting only of men, and the rape of the *Sabines*, contrived for their increase, with the history of the *Benjamites* in the three last chapters of the book of *Judges*, will, I believe, be quickly of my opinion.

## C H A P. VI.

*The Rise and Effects of Saul's Enmity to David. Merab promised to David, and given to another.*

**D**AVID, now continuing at court, was employed by *Saul* on various occasions: and, as he still acquitted himself wisely, *Saul*, in some time, set him over his men of war; that is, as it is commonly understood, made him captain of his guards. But this degree of favour lasted not long; for now *Saul's* envy and malignity returned strong upon him with his evil spirit. The occasion was thus:

As *Saul* returned in triumph from the *Philistine* war, the women from all the cities in *Israel* came to meet him, to congratulate his conquests with songs, and various instruments of music; and, as they sang together, they blended the praises of *Saul* and *David* in their chorus: but with this distinction; *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.*

THE haughty heart of *Saul* could ill digest this preference; his resentment brought back all his black passions into his breast, and refitted him for the possession of the evil spirit: *And Saul was wroth* (says the text), *and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands, and what can he*  
*have*

have more but the kingdom?—And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house. From hence it is evident, that the expression of *prophesying* is applicable to the influence either of evil or good spirits: and it is applied, both by *Plato* and *Plutarch*, to the agitations of the *Sibyls*, and other enthusiasts, who were, as the Heathens expressed it, possessed by the god; so that the very Heathens ascribed such agitations to a supernatural agency.

THUS much is certain: *Saul's* mind was now disturbed to such a degree, that *David's* music had no more power over him\*. This quickly appeared; for, as he played to calm him, *Saul* determined upon his destruction, and, watching his opportunity, with a javelin in his hand, darted it at him: which *David* (with a felicity exceeding that of *Dioxippus*) twice declined: then, being sufficiently warned of his danger, he avoided *Saul's* presence.

SAUL'S envy now began to be haunted with terror. That a man so excellent at his weapons as he was, should now twice miss his aim, and at so near a distance, had something in it very extraordinary! And it was very natural for him to think this could not be, without a remarkable interposition of Providence in *David's* behalf. Such an interposition must be for some extraordinary end; and what end could that so probably be, as his designation to royalty? he knew

\* To this, possibly, may allude that passage in the lviith Psalm;—*Which refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, &c.*



his kingdom was given away to a better man than himself (the prophet had expressly declared that): And who was so probably this better man, as the man whom all *Israel* preferred to him?

FULL of this fear, he removes *David* from him, by an honourable exile: he made him captain over a thousand; but where, or at what distance, is not said. All that we know is, that here also *David* behaved himself with remarkable prudence and good conduct; which, instead of reconciling *Saul* to him, served only to inflame his fears the more: *Wherefore* (says the text) *when Saul saw, that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him: but all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.* He headed them in all their expeditions with a bravery and a conduct equally distinguished: greatest in command, yet greater in his example! which naturally won the affections of the people to him; insomuch that it might be said, with great truth, of him and his master *Saul*, what was afterwards observed of *Tiberius* and *Germanicus*, that the one reigned in the hearts of the people, the other only in the provinces.

It were hard to paint out the distempered state of *Saul's* mind, under the continued series of *David's* successes: the sight rack'd him; but, at the same time, he had sagacity enough to derive some consolation from it. *David*, it is true, was often successful; but it did not follow, that he must *always* be so: he had prudence, prowess, and conduct; but all these are often disappointed

appointed and defeated in their best-laid schemes. What means then so likely to destroy him, as flattering him in his good fortune, and inflaming his vanity to yet higher and bolder attempts? What human heart is proof against flattery well conducted? and what so likely to point it right, as the prospect of the king's alliance? And now *Merab*, the king's eldest daughter, is promised to him in marriage, on condition of his exerting all his fortitude, in the defence of his master and his country, against the enemies of God and them.

THIS was the bait laid for his destruction. Had *Saul* killed *David* when he attempted him with his javelin, his madness might have pleaded his defence. Nor was *David* then so thoroughly established in the affections of the people; such an attempt must now be attended with more hazard: nor could it be acquitted of deliberate design; and therefore this other method was fixed upon: *And Saul said unto David, Behold my eldest daughter Merab; her will I give thee to wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles: for Saul said, let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.*

DAVID'S answer to this tempting promise, is to me, I own, no ill presumption of his being swayed by something more than human: And, indeed, what less than some heavenly influence could set the soul of an obscure youth, suddenly exalted, so far above the reach of the highest

highest and strongest temptations \*! He did not, indeed, decline the honour proposed to him; that prudence and decency forbade: but he did more; instead of claiming or even accepting it as his right, he declined all appearance of pretending to it on the score of merit: *And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?* It is true, he had often hazarded his life in the service of his prince: but what was such a life as his, compared with the honour of such an alliance?

How far he merited this honour by his subsequent behaviour, is no-where particularly told us; and, indeed, was unnecessary to be told, being sufficiently implied in those characters of prudence, wisdom, and valour, which distinguished his whole conduct. However, we are informed, that, when the time came for conferring it, *Saul* most shamefully violated his promise, and gave *Merab* to another, to *Adriel* the *Meholathite*.

THIS indignity and disappointment seem to be attended with all the circumstances that could heighten both. Probably, the match was delayed, to endear it the more; and when *David's* hopes were at the height, (and, it may be, his affection fixed) they were dashed at once.

It is finely observed of the courts of tyrants, that in them favours are wont to come slow,

\* She was due to him before (says the learned Doctor *Trapp*) by promise, for killing *Goliath*; yet he that twice inquired into the reward of that enterprize before he undertook it, never demanded it after that achievement.



and injuries sudden; *Lenta beneficia, injuriæ præcipites!*

THIS treatment was well able to exasperate a spirit less sensible of injuries than *David's*, to the highest degree; and, in all appearance, was intended to do so; that some act of outrage, or intemperance of expression, too natural on such an occasion, might supply some pretence of vengeance upon him: but this snare also the Spirit of GOD delivered him from.

## C H A P. VII.

*Michal promised to David. The Nature of the required Dower explained at large.*

*SAUL's* vengeance being thus disappointed, he soon found another occasion of wreaking it upon him, as he hoped, to more advantage.

*MICHAL*, *Saul's* second daughter, beheld *David* with other eyes than those of her father's enmity: in all probability, *David's* merit, added to her brother *Jonathan's* friendship and affection, wrought upon her. But, whatever influence *Jonathan's* friendship, or *David's* character and accomplishments, had upon her, she seems to have had prudence and virtue enough, not to indulge her desires, as long as there was any prospect of his matching with her elder sister; for we hear nothing of her liking to *David*, until after *Merab's* marriage; then it was that *Saul* was first informed of it.

HE received the account with joy: *The thing pleased him*; (says the text): and *Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him\**, and that the hand of the *Philistines* may be against him. He resolved to give her to him, as *Antiochus the Great* gave *Cleopatra*, his daughter, to *Ptolemy Epiphanes* king of *Egypt*, thinking to use her as an instrument to destroy him: and was disappointed, as *Antiochus* was; for *Michal* clave to her husband, as *Cleopatra* did, and as *Daniel* had foretold †.

BUT it seems there was some difficulty in the point, from the *Asiatic* custom of purchasing wives, and that in proportion to their dignity: a difficulty which *David's* condition, in point of fortune, ill enabled him to overcome; and such as *Saul's* express and public stipulation in the affair of *Goliath*, should have made him ashamed to insist on. However, *Saul* took care to make it at once very insidious, and not insuperable; and then commanded his servants to communicate the matter to *David*, and place it in the fairest and most tempting light before him. They told him, according to their instructions, that the king delighted in him, and all his servants loved him, and that he must be the king's son-in-law. And when *David*, in his humility, excused himself from the impossibility of his paying the

\* 1 *Sam.* xviii. 17.

† *She shall not stand on his side.* *Dan.* xi. 17. *Dr. Trott* observes, that man and wife are the two branches in the prophet *Ezekiel's* hand, inclosed in one bark, and so closing together, that they make but one piece.

dower\* of so great a prince's daughter, they proposed an expedient which they judged his magnanimity would readily embrace; *The king (say they) desireth not a dowry, but an hundred fore-skins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.* His design in this, the text assures us, was, *to make him fall by the hand of the Philistines*: this was the design that swayed him from the first. It is true, *Merab* was due to *David* by public stipulation: but, when *Saul* promised her to him, he added this express condition before-mentioned, that he should *fight the Lord's battles*, upon the hopes of his falling in them, *1 Sam. xviii. 17.*

WHEN *David* had escaped this snare, *Saul* then laid another for him, which he thought much surer; and that was, the dower of the *fore-skins* now mentioned; and, to bring the matter to a speedy issue, he stinted him to a limited time for fulfilling the condition.

DAVID had, in his humility, declined the honour of the king's alliance, by this daughter, as well as the other; but, when the condition of the *fore-skins* was once proposed, he could now no longer decline it, without the imputation of cowardice. And, certainly, a more probable expedient for his ruin could not have been thought on. This we shall soon be convinced of, when we consider, that all these hundred

\* *And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?* ch. xviii. 23. Some think, that this excuse hath a mixture of courtly resentment in it; and possibly it may.



enemies, whose *fore-skins* were to be presented to *Saul*, must fall by *David's* own hands; nor could *Saul's* end be otherwise answered: his aim was, to bring *David* so often into immediate and personal danger, and such as it was hardly possible he should so often escape: whereas, had he been allowed to complete his number with those slain by his thousand men, over whom he was captain, this might have been effected with little and unrepeatd danger. So that his thousand men, who attended him, tho' it is not to be imagined they were idle spectators on all these occasions; yet, as far as related to the number of *fore-skins* required of *David*, they were, in effect; but so many witnesses to see *Saul's* purposes faithfully fulfilled.

DAVID knew all this very well; yet did all this no way deter him from cheerfully accepting the condition. Difficulty (saith a learned commentator\* upon the text) doth but whet heroic spirits: he now rejoiced, like *Alexander*, to find a danger equal to his spirit †; and, at once, to prevent all possibility of cavil, and do ampler honour to his spouse, he doubled her dower §. Nor will his doing so, even under these circumstances, appear incredible, when we consider the account left us of *Aurelian*, by *Flavius Vopiscus* ||; or the account of some of *David's*

\* Dr. Trapp.

† *Periculum par animo.*

§ That the custom of paying dowries for wives, obtained among the *Jews*, appears from *Gen.* xxxiv. 12. and *Exod.* xxii. 16, 17.

|| He tells us, that the emperor *Aurelian* slew a thousand *Sarmatians*, in one single war, with his own hands.

worthies, in Scripture\*; or the accounts transmitted to us by travellers of some parts of *Africa*, where no man is allowed to give quarter to an enemy, until he hath an hundred of such trophies to produce in testimony of his valour†; which their wives wear, and make account of, as of their most valuable ornaments.

THIS reasoning seems also confirmed by the letter of the text, which tells us, that *David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men, &c.* Where it is observable, that the word *slew* is of the singular number; which seems to imply, that this slaughter was his own act.

THE same conclusion is also to be fairly collected from the subsequent verse; for when we are told, that *Saul* now gave him *Michal* his daughter to wife, it is immediately added, that *Saul saw and knew, that the Lord was with David.* This he had reason to conclude, from the extraordinary deliverance wrought in his favour, in the successive conquest of two hundred enemies by his own hand; whereas, had this been effected by the assistance of a thousand associates, there had surely been nothing extraordinary in it.

AND here I cannot but reflect, with united grief and horror, upon the lost condition of *Saul's*

\* 1 Chron. xi. 11, 20. 11. *Jashobeam an Hachmonite, he lift up his spear against three hundred, slain by him at one time.* Ver. 20, *Abishai, he was chief of the three; for, lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew them.*

† *Mandefso, p. 213.*

mind at this time. He saw and knew *the hand of God* in the extraordinary preservation of *David*, and yet he persisted to pursue his ruin.

To all this may be added, that *Saul's* fear and hatred of *David*, which, the text tells us, were increased on this occasion, are a farther and full confirmation of the same truth; inasmuch as the slaughter of two hundred men, by the hands of a thousand, within the limits of a proper space of time, had neither been matter of envy or enmity to *Saul*, who had himself atchieved far greater exploits.

NOTWITHSTANDING the imminent danger *David* now ran, there is no question, but *Saul* would still have been glad of some pretence for not performing his promise: but the stipulation being so public, and repeated, it was impossible to elude it.

HOWEVER, *David's* danger ended not here: *Saul* easily foresaw, that this dowry of *David's* would naturally excite the enmity of the whole *Philistine* nation against him, as it quickly did; for the *Philistine* forces now assembled and warred against *Israel*. And I believe it will be matter of no doubt, with the thinking reader, at whom their vengeance was chiefly aimed. Had *Saul* gone out against them in person on this occasion, there is no doubt but he had been a joint object of their resentment. But there is no reason, from the text, to believe that he did; and I think it probable, that he chose rather to let *David* stand the single mark of their fury: but to no purpose; for *David's* success and reputation



reputation always increased with his danger: *David* (says the text) *behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by.*

If it be asked, why *Saul* required a dower of *fore-skins*, rather than of heads? the answer is obvious. Heads would have made no distinction between *Jews* and *Philistines*: and *Saul*, whose suspicions were all awake, surmised to himself, that *David*, in that case, might slay an hundred of his subjects, and bring theirs, instead of *Philistines* heads; and therefore he required so many *fore-skins*, which the *Israelites* had not, that he might be sure he killed so many enemies. And, therefore, *Josephus*, who changes the condition from *fore-skins* to heads, hath, with great submission, very injudiciously departed from the sacred text.

THERE is one obvious inference from this account, and that is, that the *Philistine* nation had not yet practised the rite of circumcision.

## C H A P. VIII.

*Saul's Persecutions continued. David's  
signal Deliverances.*

AND now *Saul's* detestation of *David* could no longer be kept within the bounds of secret machinations, but broke out into outrage; infomuch that he communes both with his son

and servants to destroy him; or, to speak in the style of *Tacitus*, he *disclosed his wicked purpose; and, for that reason, could not execute it*.\*

SURELY, nothing could be more providential for *David*, than that *Jonathan* was let into the secret. This faithful friend soon warned him of his danger; and cautioned him to hide himself for that night in a secret place, which they had agreed upon; assuring him, that he would, the next day, take an occasion of communing with his father about him, near the place of his concealment †, and acquaint him with the issue of the conference. They met accordingly, and *Jonathan's* friendship displayed itself in all its glory.

THERE is something so powerful in the cordial, candid, seasonable, and affectionate intercession of a true friend, as can hardly be resisted; as can hardly fail to work its way into the most obdurate breast.

WHEN *Saul* communicated his design to his servants and his son, *Jonathan* received it in a prudential and well-judged silence; he would not openly oppose his father's purposes, neither would he irritate him (now, probably, in a pas-

\* *Detexit facinus, fatuus; & non implevit.*

† Doubtless *Jonathan* chose this as the place of conference with *Saul*, that, if his intercession should prove ineffectual, and *Saul's* anger should break out into loud threats, as probably it would, *David* might be warned of his danger; or, if *Saul* should prove inexorable, and yet keep his passion within bounds, *Jonathan* himself might, by some complaint, or some signal agreed on, give his friend some indication of his ill success; which, possibly, he might otherwise find no opportunity of communicating to him with that dispatch which his danger might require.

sion) by an untimely opposition; he waited, with the patience of a wise physician, to administer his medicine when the patient was in best temper to receive it: he watched his time, and the next day, in the cool of the morning, drew his father into a retired and secret conference; and then it was, that he urged his intercession with so much fidelity and address, added to a dutiful zeal, and most becoming concern for his father's honour, that *Saul's* heart was softened, and his resentments conquered. Hear the intercession of his own words: the text tells us, first, in general, that he spake good of his friend; and then added, *Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good; for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?*

THE intelligent reader will, I am persuaded, find, in all the seeming simplicity of this plain and short intercession, all the strength of reasoning, and all the skill and delicacy of address, that could possibly be cruded into so few words. He had much more to say in *David's* favour; but he well knew, that to enumerate his merits, would be to inflame his father's enmity; and therefore, tho' he mention'd *David's* merits in general, he insisted only upon that single point in which *Saul* himself had some merit, and much

compla-



complacence; and he well knew, that the bare remembrance of it would bring back to his father's mind the greatness and the generosity of the prize proposed, which excited *David's* valour; and the felicity and glory of the event, in which *Saul* himself had so great a share.

THUS he judged; and how rightly he did so, the event sufficiently informs us: *And Saul* (saith the text) *hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: And Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain.*

THE generous reader will easily judge, with what a flow of joy *Jonathan* received this assurance, and how eagerly he communicated it to his friend; how gladly he brought him back, introduced him to his father, and, in all appearance, reinstated him in his former favour.

HOWEVER, this gleam of sun-shine lasted not long. A new war broke out with the *Philistines*: *David* again commanded in it, and was again successful. A decisive battle was fought: the enemy was defeated with a great slaughter, and utterly put to flight; and *David* returned to court victorious and safe; and with him *Saul's* envy, and its attendant spirit.

DAVID had now too much merit, and too many virtues, to be borne any longer; and he must die, for the same reason that, *Seneca* tells us, *Gracinus Julius* did, because he was a better man than it was expedient for the tyrant that he should be \*. His kingdom, he knew, was given

\* Sen. de Benef. l. 2. c. 21.

away to a better man : and who so eminently a better man than himself, as *David*? And now, when the evil spirit from the Lord came upon *Saul*, he had recourse to his usual remedy; *David* played, but it was to the deaf adder, which refused to hear the voice of the charmer.

How sad and shocking a scene was this! *David* labouring, with all his study and skill, to relieve *Saul's* anguish; and *Saul*, in the same instant, meditating his destruction! Sitting sullen, and determined, with his javelin in his hand, watching his opportunity, and waiting, perhaps, until the power of music had so far calmed his spirits, as to steady his hand, he darted his spear at *David* with all his might, and with such force, that, he happily declining it, it pierced and stuck into the wall : and *David* fled.

THE reflecting reader cannot fail to observe and to adore the Providence by which *David* was once more so signally protected and delivered : nor can he well avoid revolving in his mind, that very late and solemn oath, by which *Saul* obliged himself to abstain from *David's* destruction ; an obligation now sacrificed to the gratification of that evil spirit that reigned within him.

How others have observed, I cannot say ; but I believe it will generally be found true, that, whenever we meet with any account of a murderous, a treacherous, a perjured prince, we may expect to be soon informed of some signal judgments and chastisements from GOD upon him. And give me leave to add, that, in the little circle

cle of my own observation, I have very seldom (if ever) been disappointed.

WHEN *Saul* had now added perjury to his other evil devices, his conscience became scared, and his designs desperate. *David* had escaped to his house; but *Saul's* guards quickly pursued him thither, with express orders from their master, to encompass it for that night, so as he should not escape, and to slay him in the morning.

AND here is the first instance of infatuation upon his wicked counsels. If *David* was to be destroyed, why not that very night? To what purpose to defer it, unless to give *David* some better chance for escaping? which accordingly came to pass; for *Michal*, anxious for her husband's safety, and more suspicious of danger, as by nature more timorous, either observed or had some intimation of the assassins that encompassed the house, and immediately urged her husband to make his escape that instant; and to effect it the better, she let him down through a window; and he fled, and was delivered.

THIS done, her next care was, how to delude his murderers, and, by that means, delay their pursuit. She dressed up an image, covered it with a cloth, and laid it upon a pillow of goats hair, as the text is commonly understood; or, rather, set off the head of it with goats hair resembling her husband's \*: and when the assassins entered to secure and to slay *David*, she told

\* The oriental goat is distinguished by the most shining and silky hair in the world.



them *he was sick*, and shewed him to them, as they thought, stretched upon his bed.

THIS device put them to a stand. *David* was sick; and, possibly, *Saul* would rather wait the chance of seeing him carried off by a natural death, than imbrue his hands in the blood of his benefactor.—Murder is, I believe, a hateful office to the basest spirit; but it is dreadful to the brave. And tho' it be natural to think the worst of men employed in such offices, yet it is obvious to imagine, that they were well enough pleased to have the matter remitted to their master, and to wait for new orders upon an affair of so much importance, and such difficult determination.

THEY did so; and were soon remanded, with express orders, to bring *David* in his bed, sick as he was, to *Saul*, that he might have the cruel satisfaction of slaying him with his own hands.

WHEN they returned upon this errand, they soon discovered the cheat that *Michal* had put upon them, and found the image instead of *David*.

THE bloodiness of *Saul's* intention makes it easy to conjecture the fury of his resentment, upon the disappointment of his horrid purpose: he expostulated with *Michal* upon the deceit put upon her father, and the escape contrived for his enemy; both which she excused by another artifice; pleading necessity, and the imminent danger of her life, if she declined lending *David* her assistance.

MICHAL is observed by critics to have nothing virtuous or valuable in her character \*, except this instance of conjugal fidelity and affection ; and yet even this is very much obscured by that gross falshood, which, to disguise it to her father, disgraced her husband. How much nobler and more amiable was that honest veracity of the wife of *Polyxenus*, who, being reproached by her brother *Dionysius*, the *Sicilian* tyrant, for being conscious to her husband's flight without discovering it, tho' she knew he was accused of treason against him ; asked the tyrant, Whether he could think her so degenerate, as to know of her husband's flight, without sharing all the danger of it with him ?

HOWEVER, this conduct of *Michal* suggests a fair occasion of reflecting once more upon the infatuation of *Saul's* counsels : that very daughter which he gave to *David* as a bait and a snare, is now made the sure and only means of his preservation.

\* She is supposed by some to have been an idolatress, by the teraphim which deceived *Saul's* messengers ; and she after reproached her husband with his dancing in honour of God.

## C H A P. XI.

*A Conjecture concerning the Circumstances of this Escape, grounded on the xviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm; submitted to the candid Reader. The Tempest described in this Psalm, compared with that of Virgil in the first Georgic.*

THE indulgent reader will, I hope, allow me, at least pardon me, in a conjecture that a considerable part of the xviii<sup>th</sup> *Psalm* may refer to the escape recounted in the last chapter: I mean from the 1st to the 29th verse inclusive.

THAT the 29th verse refers to this escape, can, I think, be no permanent doubt with any man that compares it with the foregoing history: *By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall.*

WHEN *Michal* let *David* down thro' a window, (suppose it a back-window, as, in all probability it was) and suppose a back-wall to be leaped over, he was still in a city; and there was no possibility of escaping, without leaping over the city wall, as well as slipping through the city-watch: he never was under the same necessity at any other time, that we know of; and therefore this verse must have reference to this time.

THIS then may, I think, be numbered among what the mathematicians call *data*; that is confessed



fessed and granted truths: and, for my part, I can see no reason, why a fair candid historian should not be allowed the liberty indulged to mathematicians, to deduce, from one confessed truth, such consequences and discoveries as naturally arise from thence. Since, then, the latter part of this verse plainly refers to this time, and to this alone, why may we not reasonably conclude, that the former part of the same verse or sentence (for it is but one sentence) relates to it also? And, indeed, I think it hardly possible, that *David* should refer to two different times and transactions in one and the same sentence. Now, if they both refer to the same transaction, there is but one of two things to be understood by it; and that is, that the troop *David* now ran through, was either the city-guard, or a troop sent by *Saul* to pursue him. If you suppose it any city-guard or watch, is it to be imagined, but that they also would pursue him? and, on the other hand, is any thing more credible, than that *Saul*, as soon as he heard of *David's* escape, immediately sent out parties in pursuit of him?

DAVID, upon finding his house encompassed by armed men, had recourse, as usual, to GOD: and the sum of his prayer on that occasion is still recorded in the lxix<sup>th</sup> psalm. This took up some time; he had his own servants to deceive, as well as the assassins; some time must be taken up to prepare for his escape, and he must wait until the streets were cleared; it must be late in the night before he could make his escape. He was alone, and  
in

in the dark. To whom could he fly? and in whom could he confide? Danger creates distrust, and distrust delay.—*Saul* had reason enough to believe he could not be got off very far; his fury inflamed his hopes, and his hopes winged his ministers.

TAKING it for granted then, that *David* was now pursued, a considerable part of this psalm is a plain narrative of his danger, and his deliverance by a very extraordinary interposition of Providence:

His enemies, after some time, came up to him, and encompassed him: he then gave himself up, as now in the very arms of death. How nobly and how poetically is this distress painted in the 4th and 5th verses of this psalm! *The cords of death encompassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The cords of hell surrounded me; the snares of death prevented me*

HE then cried out to GOD for relief; and GOD, who never failed him, sent out his thunder, a tempest, and an earthquake; which amazed, affrighted, and dispersed his enemies, and delivered him out of his distress. How gloriously, and beyond all poetic comparison, are this earthquake, tempest, and thunder described, in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th verses of this psalm!

I KNOW but one description in the whole compass of Heathen poetry, that deserves once to be named with it; and that is *Virgil's* noble description of a tempest, in the first of his

*Georgic's*, and to me the noblest effort of his genius! The classic reader will not, I hope, think much to indulge me a few moments in a short comparison and critic upon them both.

DAVID'S account of the tempest which scattered his enemies, and delivered him, stands thus:

Psal. xviii. Ver. 6. *In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God. He heard my voice out of his temple: my cry in his presence entered into his ears.*

Ver. 7. *And the earth trembled and shook, and the foundations of the mountains trembled and were tossed, because he was wroth.*

Ver. 8. *Smoke ascended from his nostrils, and fire devoured from his mouth; coals were kindled at it.*

Ver. 9. *And he bowed the heavens, and came down; and darkness was under his feet.*

Ver. 10. *And he rode upon a cherub, and flew; and flew swift on the wings of the wind\*.*

Ver. 11. *He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him the darkness of waters in the clouds of heaven.*

Ver. 12. *At the brightness before him his clouds passed away †; hail-stones and coals of fire.*

\* How admirably does the sound of the original sentence correspond to the sense! let the *English* reader judge:

*Al canphe ruab*

On the wings of the wind.

I never could read these words, but I imagined I heard the clang of a wing.

† *Abbair abberu,*

His clouds passed,

Ver.



Ver. 13. *And the Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Most High gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire.*

Ver. 14. *And he sent out his arrows, and tore and dispersed them; and multiplied his lightnings, and confounded them\*.*

Ver. 15. *The beds of waters appeared; the foundations of the world were uncovered, at thy rebuke, O Lord; at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.*

VIRGIL'S *Tempest* is well known:

*Sæpe etiam immensum cælo venit agmen aquarum,  
Et sædam glomerant tempestatem imbribus atris  
Collectæ ex alto nubes. Ruit arduus æther,  
Et pluvia ingenti sata læta bæcumque labores  
Diluit. Implentur fossæ, & cava flumina crescunt  
Cum sonitu, fervetque fretis spirantibus æquor.  
Ipse Pater, media nimborum in nocte, corusca  
Fulmina molitur dextra. Quo maxima motu  
Terra tremit: fugère feræ; & mortalia corda  
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor. Ille flagranti  
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telus  
Dejicit. Ingeminant austri, & densissimus imber  
Nunc nemora ingenti vento, nunc litora plangit.*

THESE noble lines are thus translated with uncommon spirit, closeness, and justness, by an anonymous author, in a work intituled *Virgil's Husbandry; or, An Essay on the Georgics*, Lond. 1725.

\* *Uberakim rabb vajebummim.* If the rattling and pounding of thunder be not better expressed by these words, than any I ever heard, I must own I have no notion of the significancy of sounds

*Oft from above descends a troop of floods ;  
 Oft gather from the deep the thick'ning clouds ;  
 Down rush the skies, and with impetuous rain  
 Wash out the ox's toil, and sweep away the grain :  
 The dikes are fill'd, no bounds the torrents keep ;  
 And with the breathing surges boils the deep :  
 Amidst a night of clouds, his glitt'ring fire,  
 And rattling thunder, hurls th' eternal Sire :  
 Far shakes the earth : beasts fly, and mortal hearts  
 Pale fear dejects : he, with refulgent darts,  
 Or Rhodope, or Atho's lofty crown,  
 Or steep Ceraunia's cliffs, strikes headlong down :  
 The rains condense, more furious Auster roars ;  
 Now with vast winds the woods, now lashes he the  
 [shores.*

Mr. DRYDEN's translation is more diffused :  
 but the reader will perceive how much he  
 thought some of *David's* ideas would adorn it.

*And oft whole sheets descend of sluicy rain,  
 Suck'd by the spongy clouds from off the main :  
 The lofty skies at once come pouring down,  
 The promis'd crop, and golden labours, drown.  
 The dikes are fill'd, and with a roaring sound  
 The rising rivers float the nether ground ;  
 And rocks the bellowing voice of boiling seas rebound. }  
 The Father of the Gods his glory shrouds,  
 Involv'd in tempests, and a night of clouds ;  
 And, from the middle darkness, flashing out  
 By fits, he deals his fiery bolts about.  
 Earth feels the motions of her angry God ;  
 Her intrails tremble, and her mountains nod ;  
 And flying beasts in forests seek abode : }  
 Deep horror seizes ev'ry human breast ;  
 Their pride is humbled, and their fear confess'd :*

*While*

*While he from high his rolling thunder throws,  
And fires the mountains with repeated blows :  
The rocks are from their old foundations rent :  
The winds redouble, and the rains augment :  
The waves on heaps are dash'd against the shore,  
And now the woods and now the billows roar.*

THE learned reader hath now both descriptions fairly before him, and will supply, from his own better judgment, what is defective in each translation. I shall beg leave to point out the beauties of both ; and when I have done so, the reader will determine for himself.

Ver. 6. *He heard my voice out of his temple.* Can there be a nobler idea, than to consider the heavens as the temple of God ! This temple encompasses the universe, and there the whole creation are in the presence of their Maker.

Ver. 7, &c. *He was wroth, and the earth trembled and shook — He bowed the heavens, and came down. — He rode upon a cherub. — He flew upon the wings of the wind. — He made darkness his pavilion. — At the brightness before him his clouds passed away.*

THE grandeur of these ideas is much easier conceived than explained

WHAT poetry ever equalled the magnificence of this style ! What ideas of the Divinity does it inspire ! What must we think of that mighty Being, at whose wrath *the earth trembles*, and the heavens are humbled at his feet ! *Angels and winds* his vehicles ! His voice is *thunder* ; and *lightnings* the kindling of his breath ! His Majesty veiled in *darkness* ; and yet even so, the



clouds passing away, at the glory that went before him!

IN *Virgil*, *Jupiter*, in the dark centre of his showers, deals about his thunders with his flaming right-hand: earth trembles at the mighty motion; the beasts of the forest fly; and humble fear prostrates the haughty heart of man.

NOTHING can be more nobly terrible, than the former part of this description, nor more affecting and touching than the last! For my own part, I never read it, but my blood was curdled, and my pride quelled.

HE goes on:—"He (that is *Jupiter*) beats down *Atho*, or *Rhodope*, or the lofty *Ceraunian* promontory, with his red-hot bolts:—"The winds double, and the showers thicken; the forests and the shores resound."

You see the lightnings fly, in this description. You hear the rattling of the thunder in that noble line (and the beginning of the next);

*Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo  
Dejicit:—*

You hear the crash of the falling mountains; the thickening shower patters in your ears, and the tempest roars.

ALL this is, unquestionably, noble:—but the reader will observe this essential and truly poetic difference between the two descriptions; that in *Virgil*, every thing but the thunder is natural action; and even that is acted and wielded with dreadful force, the effect of which motion is an earthquake.

B. I. *the Life of King DAVID.* 71

IN *David*, the whole universe is animated at the presence of GOD, affrighted at his wrath, and obedient to his beck! *God is angry; and the earth trembles; and coals kindle at his breath; and hail-stones fly before him.*

VIRGIL'S *Jupiter* wields his thunders: JEHOVAH commands his, and they obey. *Jupiter* deals about his bolts in the attitude of an heated hero; or, to speak more properly, a giant of resistless strength! JEHOVAH but sends out his *arrows*; they know what to do; they *tear* and *disperse*, and *his lightning confounds*.

JUPITER is angry, and he beats down a mountain! JEHOVAH is wroth, and the earth feels it; and the *foundations of the mountains are tossed to and fro*, tremble and shake like the joints of an affrighted man! At one *blast of his breath* the ocean opens to her deepest chanel; and the foundations of the earth are bared before him.

IN a word; *Virgil's* description is truly noble; but *David's* beyond all expression grand!

To all this may be added, that *David* wrote first: and if *Ovid* read *Moses*, possibly *Virgil* read *David*. I believe he read *David*, because I am sure he read *Isaiab*.

THIS, at least, must be allowed, that earthquakes are not the natural effects of thunder. They are united in *David's* description, and so they are in *Virgil's*: they are the effect of GOD's wrath, in *David*; they are the effects of the angry motion of *Jupiter's* right hand, in *Virgil*.

IT must also be owned, that *Virgil's Jupiter*, in a night of clouds, is very like *David's JEHOVAH*, encompassed with *darkness* in the *waters* of the *clouds* of *heaven*! In this, indeed, JEHOVAH has the advantage, that his glory cannot be wholly shrouded; some gleams of it still flash out as he passes, and dispel the clouds.

I BEG to conclude with one short observation, and that is, that the painting in the 12th and 13th verses of this psalm, is, to my imagination, by much the finest I ever saw in poetry:—  
*At the brightness before him his clouds passed away; hail-stones and coals of fire.—*

*And the Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Most High gave his voice; hail-stones and coals of fire.* The poet was too transported to wait for auxiliary verbs, and connecting particles! The description is to me a noble picture, in which the gusts of hail, and flashes of fire, burst out from the clouds with as much spirit and force as in a real tempest.

IT is now time to return, and resume the thread of our history.

WHEN *Saul* found, that *David* had intirely escaped the pursuers, he summoned a council, (whether the *sanhedrim*, or what is now understood by a privy council, or a more general council of the states, is hard to say) that he might oppress him more securely under the sanction of their judgment: they met accordingly, and made no scruple to ratify the pleasure of their prince by their wicked decisions. This decision, as *Dr. Patrick* thinks, and the title of the psalm imports,



is what *David* reproves in the first verse of the lviith psalm: *Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?*

FROM *David's* calling them the *congregation*, it is probable, that this was a general council of the people; and, from this time, all *Saul's* attempts and machinations against *David* had all the warrant and authority of a public national prosecution.

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C H A P. X.

*David flies to Samuel to Ramah. Saul pursues him thither. What ensued thereupon. David returns to Jonathan at Gibeah, and is again obliged to fly. Their solemn Covenant and exquisite Distress at parting.*

**D**AVID, once more delivered, flies to *Ramah* to *Samuel*; by whom, in all probability, he hoped to be protected, or, at least, concealed for a season.

FLYING to the prophet, was flying to the more immediate protection of Almighty God; and GOD, in whom he confided, failed him not; for *Samuel*, to whom he related the whole train of *Saul's* treacheries, and the divine deliverances, received and returned with him to his prophetic college

college at *Naioth*; where he hoped to find a sanctuary for him, from the privileges antiently indulged to that sacred retreat, and, indeed, to all men of that sacred character, (and all under their protection) where-ever civility prevailed over the face of the earth \*. But *Saul* was now too far gone in his enmity to God and goodness, to be swayed by such considerations; for no sooner did he learn, that *David* was at *Naioth*, but he immediately sent messengers to take him. They went; and when they arrived, they found the sacred assembly, under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God, prophesying, and *Samuel* presiding over them: and, to convince that infidel tribe, that these prophesyings were no fanatic delusions, or efforts of enthusiasm, they themselves were seized with the same sacred influence, and prophesied also. And when this was told *Saul*, he sent other messengers again and again; and they also were subdued by the same Spirit of God. At last he went himself; inquiring, as he went on, where *Samuel* and *David* were? And, being informed at the great well of *Secku* (where there was a great resort of persons to draw water) that they were at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, he pressed forward in quest of them. And as he proceeded, God, to shew that his power is neither confined to place nor persons, that the prophesyings at *Naioth* were owing to no influence of example, to no intoxicating vapours, or temperature of the air, (as was suspected of some

\* See *Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis*, l. 3. c. 11.

of the oracles of old) seized him also with his sacred influence, long before he reached *Naioth*, and conducted him under it to the assembly of the prophets; where, forgetting his bloody purpose, he put off his robes of royalty, and military apparatus, and prophesied in the presence of *Samuel*, and continued under a very distinguished influence of the Spirit of GOD that whole day and night: *He lay down naked* \*, (says the text) in the same sense that *Tacitus* calls the *Germans* naked, *rejeçtâ veste superiore*, when they had thrown off their upper garment; which now gave new occasion to the repetition of that pro-

\* Mr. *Howel's* comment upon this passage (*Hist. of the Bible* vol. ii. b. 5. p. 18, 19. is well worth noticing: "The words of the original (says he) which are rendered *naked*, signify often nothing else but to have a part of the body uncovered, as their versions translate it, 2 *Sam.* vi. 20. or, to be without a gown or upper garment, such as the *Easterns* and *Romans* wore. We need but consider the circumstances which *Isaiab* and *St. John* remark, when they spake of *nakedness*, to be persuaded, that they did not mean a being altogether naked: for God commanded *Isaiab* to put off his sackcloth; and to go barefoot for three years; only to denote, that the *Egyptians* and *Arabians* were to be carried away captive in the same manner by the *Assyrians*. But it was never the custom to strip captives altogether naked, but only to strip them of their best cloaths, and to give them worse and shorter, that they might be the more fit for service, as *Sanctius* and *Grotius* have observed. Besides, it is not probable, that *Isaiab* could have lived three whole years without any cloaths to cover him. We must therefore render, it that *Saul* stript himself of his upper garment, and lay almost naked on the ground. In the same sense that *Aurelius Victor*, speaking of those who were sent to *Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus*, to bring him to the senate to be made dictator, says, that they found him naked, ploughing on the other side of the *Tiber*. For it were ridiculous to imagine, that he was altogether naked. And *Titus Livius*, relating the same story, observes, that he called to his wife *Rucca* for his gown, or *toga*, that he might appear fit to accompany them."



verbal taunt against him, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

DOUBTLESS *Saul* (with the wits and flatterers of his court) had, in the fulness of his libertine spirit, often turned *David*, and the prophetic choir, to which he had associated himself, to abundant ridicule! and now the ridicule is retorted upon himself: a ridicule, which (as *Erasmus* observes) is properly applied to any man who is unfitly associated.

WHILST *Saul* continued under this influence of the Holy Spirit, *David* returned from *Ramah* to *Gibeah*, where the court then resided, and where *Jonathan* is believed to have been governor: here he had recourse to his faithful friend for aid and advice in his present exigency; here he expostulated with him upon the cruelty of his father's persecution, and endeavoured to find out the cause of it.

JONATHAN gave him all the consolation he could; and probably confiding, more than he ought, in the sincerity of *Saul's* conversion, from the late miracle wrought upon him, endeavoured to persuade *David*, that no more mischief was meant him; inasmuch as his father, who concealed nothing from him, had not given him the least hint of any such intention. But this, far from assuring *David*, confirmed him the more in the persuasion of some secret designs laid against him, which were industriously concealed from *Jonathan*, from a persuasion, that his friendship would discover them to *David*: *And David swore* (1 Sam. xx. 3.) *moreover,*  
and.

and said, *Thy father certainly knoweth, that I have found grace in thy eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved\* : but truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.*

To this *Jonathan* replied, That he was ready to do every thing that *David's* heart desired, for his safety.

UPON this, it was agreed, that the next day, being the festival of the *New Moon*, at which time *David's* attendance would be expected, if *Saul* should inquire for him, *Jonathan* should answer, that he had, at his earnest request, given him leave to attend an annual family sacrifice then held at *Bethlehem*. If the king acquiesced in that excuse, they were to conclude, that all was well; if not, that evil was determined against *David*.

DAVID added, that, in acting thus, *Jonathan* would give him a sure proof of his friendship, and inviolable adherence to that covenant, which they had mutually confirmed by solemn oaths: but, if *Jonathan* declined doing this, he then begged, that, if he were conscious of any guilt in him that deserved death, he would slay him himself; that he might have the satisfaction of dying by the hand of his friend, and not be exposed to the rage of his cruel father: *If there*

\* The reader will observe a singular delicacy in this expression: the honour *David* had for *Jonathan*, would not let him put any expression into the mouth of his father, which should imply the least distrust of his son: and therefore he gives it quite another turn; as if *Saul* concealed his designs upon *David* from *Jonathan*, only to avoid afflicting him.

*be in me iniquity (says he), slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?*

THIS he said in the fulness of friendly affliction; as the *Japonese* at this day, when their friends are doomed to die, slay them with their own hands, thinking it infamous to fall by the hand of a common executioner: tho' *David's* request had, I think, more of *Phædra's* wish in it, to die by the hand of that person who was dearest to him. And *Jonathan* so understood it; for we find this tender expression touched him to the quick, and he immediately cried out, *Far be it from me!* assuring *David*, at the same time, that, far from destroying him himself, if he knew any evil designs of his father against him, he would certainly discover them. *David* then asked, supposing there were such designs, and *Jonathan* should come to the knowledge of them, what method could he take of informing him? To this *Jonathan*, having hit upon a contrivance that would effect what he desired, only replied, by desiring him to walk out into the fields with him; and, as they passed along, his generous heart, filled with all the tenderness of friendship, and touched with the appearance of his being suspected by *David*, broke out into that tender profession of his integrity, and pathetic appeal to Almighty God for it, which nothing ever yet equalled: *O Lord God of Israel, when I have sounded my father, about to-morrow any time, or the third day; and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee, the Lord do so,*  
and



*and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father.*

HE then proceeds, in the fulness of his friendship for him, and in full assurance, that *David* would one day fill the throne which *GOD* intended for him, to oblige him once more to ratify the covenant which they had mutually sworn: *And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, shew me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not; but also, thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever.*

How tender a sense had *Jonathan* of that friendship which he thus wishes to perpetuate! How unspeakable a generosity, to stipulate for his own life, with that man, whose life was then absolutely in his power! interceding, that his children might not be considered as enemies to him: *Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever; no not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth:* concluding all with that remarkable and undistinguishing imprecation; *Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.*

WHEN *Jonathan* had thus ended the covenant on his part, he presses *David*, in a transport of tenderness, to confirm it anew; to oblige him once more, from the delight he took in his friendship, to give him new assurances of it; again to bind it to him by oath: *And Jonathan*  
*caused*

caused *David* to swear again (says the text), because he loved him; for he loved him as his own soul. Whoever knows what it is to love, will need no better proof of it.

THEY then agreed, that *David* might go down to *Bethlehem* for three days; at the end of which he should return to his former place of concealment, near the stone of *Ezel*, and tarry there until *Jonathan* gave him a signal either to appear or fly.

THE signal agreed on was this, that *Jonathan* should, at the time appointed, walk into the field, as it were to shoot at a mark; and when he had shot three arrows, if he called to the lad that gathered up the arrows, to tell him, they were on this side of him, then *David* might return to court; for that should be a signal that all was well, and no evil intended him: but if he should call to the lad, that the arrows were beyond him, then was he to fly as fast as he could, as justly fearing the worst.

As *Jonathan* could not tell how he might be watched and followed into the field, so as to be precluded from all possibility of communing with his friend, there was a necessity of their agreeing upon some secret signal, that might be unintelligible to others; and when they had done so, *Jonathan* concludes all with a new address to Almighty God, that he would perpetuate the covenant established between them.

ACCORDING as they had foreseen, so it fell out; when the feast of the *New Moon* came on, *Saul* and his company sat down to meat.

And

And as there seems to be some allusion to the antient way of eating, in the account we have of it, it will not, I hope, be amiss to describe it more particularly.

THE text tells us no more than this, that *the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall.* From whence the learned conclude, that the table was set, after the antient manner, in a half-circle: and *Saul*, as was meet, seated himself (for the way of reclining at meat was not yet introduced) at the middle and most honourable part of it; which, from the nature of the thing, was the part next the wall.

THE text adds, that *Jonathan* arose, and *Abner* sat upon *Saul's* side; and therefore, it is probable, that *Jonathan's* rising was to give place to his uncle. From this also it is easy to infer, that the table was semicircular; for otherwise *Saul's* place would have had no distinction, since *Abner*, who sat by his side, would also have sat by the wall as well as he.

IN this situation, it was easy to see, that *David's* place, which, probably, was next to *Jonathan*, was empty; which though *Saul* well observed, he passed over in silence the first day, concluding he was prevented by some legal pollution: but, as this feast, through the uncertainty of the moon's appearance, was always kept two days\*, *Saul*, finding *David's* place again

\* The *New Moon* was proclaimed according to its appearance; and the appearance being uncertain, sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the evening, at noon, or at midnight, therefore they observed two days in honour of it.



empty, the next day inquired of *Jonathan*, why the son of *Jesse* was absent both that day and the day before.

*JONATHAN* answered, as was agreed on, that he had earnestly begged leave to attend the family-sacrifice at *Bethlehem*; and that his brother had commanded him, in his father's name, to attend at it; and therefore he had consented to let him go, which was the reason of his absence.

AT the hearing of this, *Saul's* anger kindled into a furious rage, which broke out into bitter reproaches upon his son; charging him at once with folly, rebellion, and perverseness; urging, that he had chosen the son of *Jesse* to his own confusion, and the confusion of his mother's nakedness; by this reproach aspersing his very birth, as if so degenerate a son could not be his, but the offspring of his mother's guilt, the issue of a criminal commerce with some other man; adding, that, as long as the son of *Jesse* lived, neither he nor his kingdom should be established; and concluding with a peremptory command, to send instantly, and fetch *David* to him, for that he should surely die.

THIS cruel treatment, concluding in so cruel a command, got the better of *Jonathan's* temper. Those quick questions wherewith he replies upon his father, *Wherefore shall he die?* and, *What hath he done?* sufficiently evince this. Besides, the text adds, that *he arose from the table in fierce anger*: at which, *Saul*, incensed beyond all bound, caught up a javelin, and darted  
it

it at him ; which *Jonathan* (probably upon his guard, as expecting no less) happily escaped.

IF it be asked, how it came to pass, that *Saul* always had his spear in readiness, (as on this and other occasions) to execute his evil purposes? I answer, that spears were the sceptres of those ages, which the kings always carried in their hands.

THAT they always carried their sceptres in their hands, appears from *Homer*. And that those sceptres were spears, is evident from the 23d book of *Justin's History*, c. 3. where, speaking of the first age of the *Romans*, which, *Dr. Patrick* thinks, was about the age of *Saul*, he tells us, that as yet in those times kings had spears as ensigns of royalty, which the *Greeks* called sceptres. And *Pausanias*, in his *Bæotics*, tells us, that the kings of *Argos* called their sceptres spears.

THE treatment which *Jonathan* received, was a sufficient indication of what *David* was to expect ; and both these, his sorrow for his friend, and shame of the indignities he himself endured, turned that day's festival into a day of abstinence and mortification with *Jonathan*: however, the disgrace and chagrin he was in, gave him a better pretence for retiring and secluding himself from company, and consequently a better opportunity of keeping his appointment with *David* less observed. He went out into the field next morning, attended only by one lad, who carried his arrows ; and when he had directed the lad towards the place to which he aimed his arrows, as the lad hastened thither, he shot an arrow beyond him ; commanding him, at the same time,

(as the lad apprehended) to make all the dispatch he could; but, in reality, cautioning *David* to escape, and make the best of his way. However, finding the coast was clear, and eager to have one moment's enjoyment of his friend, he dispatched his attendant with all the speed he could to the city.

WHEN the lad was gone, *David* came forth from the opposite side of the rock\*; and, oppressed at once with tenderness to his friend, gratitude to his benefactor, and veneration for his prince, he fell on his face, and bowed himself three times to the earth before him: they then fell into one another's arms, embraced, and wept over each other with a distress that is not to be described, until *David* exceeded.

It is justly observed, that the noblest minds are, like the noblest metals, easily melted; and the ancients, with good reason, made this one mark of true generosity. From hence those poetic, became also proverbial expressions, Ἀγαστοὶ δ' ἀεὶ δάκρυα ἄνδρες †. *Et faciles motus mens generosa capit* \*\*.

COMMENTATORS account for the excess of *David's* distress on this occasion, from the lamentable prospect of his exile from his family, from his friends, and, it may be, from the people of God. But we should remember, that commentators are not always the best judges of true heroism. *David*, I am persuaded, had a heart too brave to be sunk by such selfish considerations.

\* *Jonathan* discharged his arrows on the north side of the rock; and the text tells us, that *David* arose out of the south: he avoided shooting on the side *David* lay, for fear of a discovery.

† The good are quickly melted into tears.

\*\* The generous mind is easy to be mov'd.



IF the generous reader will allow himself to determine this point from the sentiments of his own breast, I dare believe he will not hesitate one moment to pronounce, that it was the sense, not of his own distress, but of *Jonathan's* generosity, that overwhelmed *David*. He was now leaving, perhaps taking his last leave of, that man, who, though he knew *David* stood between him and a throne, yet had often saved his life, and was now just come from saving it again, at the imminent hazard of his own!

AND how was he leaving this unvaluable friend? he was leaving him to the rage of a furious incensed father, who would not fail to destroy him, for the very kindness he was then shewing to *David*, if ever it should come to this knowledge.

WHERE is the heart that could be insensible? Where is the heart that must not sink under this distress? *Jonathan* was too delicate, and too generous not to see all the movements of *David's* heart on this distressful occasion; and, seeing them, he repressed his own grief, for fear of sinking his friend too much, by excess of tenderness! This made him conclude the conference in that religious and calm manner recorded in the text (1 Sam. xx. 42.): *And Jonathan said unto David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.* This said, *David* arose, broke away from his friend, and went into exile, and *Jonathan* returned to the city.

THEN it was, in all probability, that this wandering exile brake out into this and the following complaints (*Pfal. xvii.*): *Hear the right, O Lord, consider my complaint, and hearken unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence, and let thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal.—O hold thou up my goings, that my footsteps slip not, &c.*

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## C H A P. XI.

*David flies to Ahimelech at Nob : His Conduct there examined, and excused. From Nob he flies to Achish at Gath : His Conduct there examined, and accounted for.*

**B**EFORE we follow *David* into exile, it will not be amiss to inform my readers of less learning, that the *Romans* also had feasts not unlike the *New Moon* feasts of the *Jews*, (mentioned in the last chapter) called *Charistia*, or *Feasts of Love*, to which none but their kindred were invited\* ; a festivity which, in all probability, they borrowed from the *Jews*.

**DAVID**, in his first flight from *Saul*, had recourse to the prophet of **GOD** ; and now his

\* Val. Max. l. II. c. I.

Ovid. *Falk.*—*Proxima cognati dixere charistia charis,  
Et venit ad socios turba propinqua deos.*

next is to his priest. He came to *Nob*, a city of *Benjamin*, not far from *Jerusalem*, to *Ahimelech*, otherwise called *Abiathar*, the high-priest; and there, in all probability, he hoped to be sheltered for a season; there was the altar and tabernacle; and there also he probably said to himself, *Under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge, until this tyranny be over past.* And, possibly, so it might have been, had he not been prevented by the sight of *Doeg the Edomite*, one of the servants of *Saul*, and chief of his herdsmen; who, being detained there that day, either because it was the Sabbath, or by reason of some vow, or other religious regard, *David* well knew, would make a merit to *Saul* of discovering his retreat. And, in all probability, the high-priest himself suspected as much; for the text tells us, that *he was afraid* at the meeting of *David*, which there had otherwise been no cause for. Then *Ahimelech* inquired, Why he was alone, and not attended as became his dignity? To which he answered, That he was employed by the king upon an affair which required secrecy and dispatch; and therefore he came away in that private manner, and appointed his servants where to meet him.

HERE *David* is charged by most commentators with the guilt of adding one lye to another; a falsification which, in its consequence, cost the priests of GOD their lives. And it is thought, that, in compunction for this guilt, he utters that lamentable complaint, in the cxixth psalm, at the 28th and 29th verses, *My soul melteth away*



for very heaviness:—Take from me the way of lying.

ALL men, however, do not see this matter in the same light; there are some who cannot bring themselves to believe, that any reflection upon this part of his conduct lay heavy upon *David*, because they cannot charge him in this matter as others do. His intention was innocent: he industriously concealed his condition from the high-priest, to keep him clear of all suspicion and charge of having combined with him against *Saul*.

I FIND many learned men, who honour truth, as much as any of its advocates, and yet will not load every uninjuring, undefigning, and much less every well-defigning deceit, with the guilt of lying. They cannot, indeed, go in altogether with *Euripides*, who is of opinion, that when truth is likely to be attended with great evil, falsehood is pardonable\*; well knowing, that a good man should speak the truth from his heart in many instances, even to his own greatest damage and disadvantage. All that they insist on is, that we are not obliged to speak the truth either to our own or other mens disadvantage, to such as have no right to know it from us; and, consequently are no way injured by not knowing it. He is a good man, (saith *Cicero*, 3 *Offic.*) who does all the good he can to others, and injures no one, unless grievously provoked. To dissemble or disguise the truth, from one who

\* Ὅτι δ' ἄλλοθεν δεινὸν ἢ ἀλήθεια δῆλα,  
Συζητοῦσιν ἀπὸν ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ μὴ καλῶν.

hath no right to know it, is no injury: consequently such a conduct is consistent with the character of a good man.

I KNOW no imputation of guilt upon this conduct in the Scriptures. The best writers upon the law of nature censure it not. And I should be glad to know, from those rigid gentlemen who differ from these learned writers, how children, fools, madmen, and ruffians, are to be treated upon their principles. The cases are obvious.

WHEN *David* had excused his coming thus unattended, as well as he could, to the high-priest, he begged such a supply of provisions from him as he could spare. The high-priest answered, That he had no common bread; and made some difficulty of supplying him with that which had been hallowed the day before, lest his servants might be under some legal pollution, especially with regard to women\*. But this was removed, by *David's* assuring him, that they were under no legal pollution; and that the *shew-bread* of the day before, was now, in a manner, become common, since there was other bread this day sanctified in the vessel.

THEN *David* applied to him for some sword, or spear, or other arms, as having left his own behind him, through the haste which the king's business required. To which the priest answered; *The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou*

\* Here we see, that some degree of purification, at least non-pollution, was required, to fit people for eating the *shew bread*. How much more the sacramental!

*slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here, wrapt in a cloth behind the ephod; if thou wilt take that, take it; for there is no other, save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.*

BEFORE *David* departed, he prevailed upon the high-priest to inquire of GOD concerning him: but what answer he received, or whether he obeyed the divine direction or monition, is not said. It is certain, he sometimes governed himself by other measures; and it is as certain, he always had reason to repent his doing so, as most certainly he did at this time.

THE resolution he took, was, to throw himself under the protection of *Achish* the *Philistine* king; and he did so accordingly, with *Goliath's* sword by his side.

IT is not easy to pronounce upon this conduct; and I shall take no more upon me, than to observe, what is obvious to every reader, that it was not inspired by the dictates of common prudence. Some imagine that he meant to conceal himself at that court, and only made use of the privilege antiently indulged to strangers, of sojourning for a season wherever they thought fit, without having any questions asked them. But, surely, had this been his view, he never would have sojourned there with such a mark of distinction as *Goliath's* sword. Besides, there is no doubt but that his name and person were now become as dreadful to the *Philistines*, as ever that of *Scanderbeg* was after to the *Turks*. Nay, it should seem, that they had by this time been acquainted



acquainted even with his designation to the crown; for so the servants of *Achish* plainly intimate, in their informations to their master: *Is not this* (say they) *David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

I HAVE NO doubt but that *David* frankly and openly owned, from the beginning, who he was, and threw himself upon the king's mercy for protection. But when they acquainted their master, that he was king elect of the realm of *Israel*, they insinuated this as a reason why he should not be trusted, or, possibly, they alluded to the condition stipulated in the combat with *Goliath*, that the people of the conquered champion should serve those of the conqueror: so that, if *David* was king of *Judea*, he would consider himself as king of *Palestine* also.

THIS conduct of the courtiers startled *David*. He then saw into what streights he had brought himself; and had no way of escaping, but by changing his behaviour, and counterfeiting madness. The text tells us, *David was sore afraid of Achish; and he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands; well knowing that madmen are rather objects of pity than of punishment; and played his part so well, that he effectually deceived them.* The king, it seems, was not of a humour either to be entertained with men of that character, or even to endure them; and so ordered him to be turned out of his court. In memory of which great deliverance,

liverance, he is said to have composed the lvth psalm : which is an earnest application to God, and a thankful recognition of his infinite goodness, in saving and protecting him from his enemies.

It is, besides this, a key that lets us into the true secret of *David's* conduct upon this occasion.

FROM this psalm it plainly appears, that the courtiers of *Gath* were bent upon *David's* destruction, and daily caballed against him : they soon perceived him to be a great genius ; a character not always loved and honoured as it ought, even in a friend ; but always dreaded, if not hated, in an enemy ; and they resolved his ruin ; and, to be sure to effect it, they misconstrued and gave wrong turns to every thing he said or did : ver. 5. *Every thing* (says he) *they wrest my words ; all their thoughts are against me for evil : they gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul.*

WHAT should he do ? He had dealt with them in the integrity and simplicity of his heart ; but his honesty was interpreted into guile. To labour to set himself right with them, were vain ; for they designedly misinterpreted every thing : and to enter into any debate with them upon it, would be but to discover his distrust, and ensure his destruction. Fair open dealing would not do : what if he tried to deceive ? To deceive the deceiver, is, in many instances, meritorious ; in none, criminal. And what so likely to deceive,

as the very reverse of that character which they had so misconstrued? He was undone, as a wise man; he had a chance to escape, as a madman: he tried, and the experiment succeeded.

SOME critics have indulged themselves in vilifying and traducing *David* upon this account: but others, with more reason, consider this conduct as a strong specimen of sagacity and penetration, and as a well judged, an honest, and an honourable fraud; and can no more censure *David* for saving his life by this guile, than they can *Solon* for serving his country.

IF any man object to this way of reasoning from the *Psalms*, I beseech him to reflect, how unreasonable it would be to suppose, that a hymn written upon a particular occasion, should yet contain nothing in it any way relating to that occasion; and, on the other hand if those hymns contain particularities not arising from the general nature of prayer or thanksgiving, whether we must not, by all the rules of rational interpretation, refer those particularities to the occasion upon which the hymn was composed: and if we have a right to do this, surely we have a right to reason from them.



## C H A P. XII.

*David flies to the Cave of Adullam. Some Account of the Persons who resorted to him there.*

**D**AVID's next refuge was the cave of *Adullam*, in the tribe of *Judah*, and to the east of *Eleutheropolis*\*; a place fortified by nature, and so fitted for the security of persons in distress, that we are told it hath frequently given a refuge from the *Turks* to *Christians*, who fled thither with their families, flocks, and herds.

HITHER his friends, those especially of his own family, who had reason to apprehend, that they should be involved in the imputation of his guilt, resorted to him. Hither also, as it is generally understood, came those valiant men, and great captains of the tribe of *Gad*, who were said, in *1 Chron.* ch. xii. to have *separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness, men of might, men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were swift as the roes upon the mountains.*

THESE men had all the natural and acquired advantages that could best distinguish soldiers:

\* *Eusebius* gives this situation to a town of that name extant in his time. This was, probably, the country of *Hirah*, *Judah's* associate, *Gen.* xxxviii.

they

they were brave, strong, and swift, with such a fierceness of aspect as terrified their enemies. *Aristotle* observes, that lions resemble men more in their countenances than any other animals; and, as lions are the fiercest and noblest of the inferior animals, the ancients thought it no mean commendation in men of war to resemble them.

THE chief of these *Gadites* were captains, (whether of *Saul's* army then, or of *David's* afterwards, is not clear) some of thousands, and the least of hundreds.

THE sacred text observes of these, as a farther indication of their courage, that they ventured over *Jordan* in the most dangerous season, (probably swam over it) when the river was deepest, and most rapid, which was in the first month, the season of the barley harvest: for now the snows from the neighbouring mountains (*Lebanon* especially) began to melt, and swelled the river above its banks.

WHEN they had conquered the river, they had yet had other enemies to encounter, who are called, in the *English* translation, *men of the valleys*; these also they conquered: *They put the valleys to flight* (says the text) *to the east, and to the west.*

AFTER these came a mixed company of the tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* in a considerable body. *David* went out to meet them; and, seeing so many of *Saul's* tribe, and, probably, some of his kindred, he apprehended there might be some treachery intended him. He was far from a suspicious spirit: yet it behoved him to

be upon his guard; however, much must be ventured, if he meant to be secured from *Saul*. At worst he could but die; and, to a brave man, death is far better than a mean distrust. He told them, in all the heroic simplicity, and with all the frankness, of a generous spirit, that if they came with friendly intentions towards him, they should meet with faithful returns of affection and friendship from him; but if they came to betray an innocent man to his enemies, he referred the vengeance of such guilt to GOD: *If (says he) ye be come peacably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me unto mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look down thereon, and rebuke it\**.

THEN *Amasai*, chief of these great leaders, struck with the openness and dignity of his conduct, and inspired with a noble zeal for the cause of so brave and so injured a man, replied at once with a spirit which nothing but the original can express in its more than *Laconic* strength and brevity; *Thine, David; and with thee, thou son of Jesse†, peace. Peace to thee, and peace to thy helpers; for thy God helpeth thee.*

THEN *David* received them, and made *them* captains of the host.

\* The conciseness of the original hath, I think, great dignity; *look*, and *rebuke*.

† The meaning of that expression I take to be this: notwithstanding they reproach thy birth, and taunt thee with the appellation of the son of *Jesse*, we are thine.—



THE candid and learned reader will best judge for himself, whether he hath ever observed, in all the accounts of antiquity, so heroic an address, and so soldierly a reply.

THIS is the account left us of those great men, who resorted to *David* at *Adullam*; and with these, as it was natural, mixed themselves all such as were discontented, in debt, and distress, to the number of about four hundred men in all; and he became their captain.

PROBABLY that usage now prevailed among the *Jews*, which, *Cæsar* tells us, antiently obtained among the *Gauls*, for those that were in debt, oppressed by tributes, or the tyranny of the great, to betake themselves to the service of some eminent man for protection; by him they were maintained, and to him they devoted themselves, under a solemn obligation to live and die with him. These were called, in the *Gallic* language, *Soldurii*; which must be owned to be a very honourable original of the word *Soldier*. It is evident, that such might be very honest and good men; and such in all probability, were *David's* companions.

HERE it is asked, How *David* could, in conscience, protect those men from their creditors? To that it is obvious to answer; That, to rescue unhappy men, who are not able to pay their debts, from the tyranny of cruel creditors, is one of the greatest acts of humanity and mercy; and the distress these were in, (sufficiently seen in their recourse to *David*, then in the extremity of distress) shews their inability to satisfy

theirs: but tho' they were now unable to satisfy their creditors, their circumstances were, in some time, considerably mended; and, very probably, when *David* was enabled, in some measure, to pay his debts of gratitude, they were in a condition to clear off their debts of justice; so that both debtors and creditors were, in all probability, benefited by the refuge which *David* now afforded.

THAT good men have often had the misfortune to be in debt, and many ways oppressed, the histories of all countries assure us.

WHETHER these were good men when they resorted to *David*, is not easy to say: but if they were not, that they became so, by his discipline, influence, and example, is sufficiently evident from their subsequent behaviour; and makes it credible, that it was chiefly for their use he composed the xxxivth psalm, which contains the noblest encouragements to piety and virtue, from an assurance, that all such as are so devoted, are the immediate care of Almighty GOD; as all those of a contrary character are his abhorrence, and the sure marks of his vengeance. And surely this psalm, considered in this light, is one of the noblest, the best-turned, and best judged, and best adapted compositions that ever were penned\*.

WHE-

\* He begins, by encouraging them to piety, and gratitude to God, from his own example: *I will alway give thanks unto the Lord: his praise shall ever be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O*  
praise.

WHETHER Mr. Bayle be sufficiently justified, in calling this company *a troop of banditti*, (that is, ruffians, robbers, and murderers) and considering them in the same light with the associates of *Cataline*, the candid reader will judge for himself.

*praise the Lord with me; and let us magnify his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me: yea, he delivered me out of all my fear. They had an eye unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord beareth him: yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord tarricth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* He then exhorts others to make trial of the same mercies; to learn the goodness of god from their own experience. *O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints; for they that fear him lack nothing.* He then assures them, that strength and magnanimity are no securities from want and distress; whereas trust and confidence in God is a never-failing source of every thing that is good: *The lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.* After which he sums up all in a most pathetic and beautiful exhortation to piety, to virtue, and to confidence in God; in full assurance, that, as he was the guardian and true protector of virtue in distress, so was he the unerring observer, and steady avenger, of wickedness: *Come ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth to live, and would fain see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile. Eschew evil, and do good: seek peace, and ensue it. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers. The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil: to root out the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord beareth them: and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart: and will save such as be of an humble spirit. Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of all. He keepeth all his bones: so that not one of them is broken. But misfortune shall slay the ungodly: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants; and all they that put their trust in him shall not be desolate.*



IN this situation *David's* first care was, to place his father and his mother in safety under the protection of the king of *Moab*, the chief of those princes which were at enmity with *Saul*; which he had the more reason to hope for, as being descended from *Ruth*, a woman of that nation, and supposed of the royal family.

THE king's residence was at *Mizpeh*, a strong fortress, where *David's* parents continued all the time he was in the hold.

HIS address to the king on this occasion, his resignation, and his dependence upon GOD, are all very remarkable? *And he said unto the king, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth and be with you, until I know what God will do for me.* He could not bear, that his aged parents should be tied to a cold cave, and a perilous confinement, exposed to all the hardships of a siege, to dearths, to damps, and dangers of various kinds; and therefore he begs leave of the king to take them from thence, and place them under his protection. To say the truth, it were hard to determine which was most conspicuous, his piety to GOD, or to his parents, on this occasion.

THE king received them graciously and honourably, and lodged them in some of the apartments of his court; for this seems plainly implied, where the text tells us, that he *brought them before the king of Moab*, (that is, into his presence) *and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.*

## C H A P. VIII.

*David flies to the Forest at Hareth : His Employment there. Saul's Impatience for Revenge finely painted in the Text. The Priests at Nob massacred.*

**H**OW long *David* continued after this in the cave of *Adullam*, is not said. We only know, that he left it, upon the monition of the prophet *Gad*; whom *GOD* seems to have raised up at this time on purpose for his support: *Abide not in the hold* (said the prophet to him): *depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.* *GOD* had other works, and other trials, to exercise him in, and therefore he would suffer him to lie no longer buried in a cave. Then *David* departed, and went into the forest of *Hareth*.

OF this forest *Rabbi Solomon* says, (I presume upon the credit of antient tradition) that, being before dry, barren, and impassable, it now became fruitful and irriguous; and that *David* alludes to this in the xxiii<sup>d</sup> psalm, where he considers *GOD* as his *Shepherd*, who would, in his own time, lead him into fruitful pastures; and till then he was safe, under his protection, in the most dangerous scenes\*.

\* *He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort — Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.*

WHEN he calls GOD his *Shepherd*, he plainly implies, that he followed where-ever it pleased GOD to guide him; alluding to the practice of the *Asiatic* shepherds, who do not drive, but lead their flocks; which are trained to follow them, as *David* evidently did the guidance of GOD at this time.

THIS, I think, is the most rational comment transmitted to us by the *Rabbins*.

AND, surely, it is not impossible, but that this, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing from GOD upon the industry of *David*, and his companions, become a green pasture. This conduct, and, in all probability alluding to this very time, he himself numbers among those wonders which GOD doth for the children of men, *Psal. cvii.* that he maketh water-springs of a dry ground, and there he setteth the hungry, that they may build them a city to dwell in; that they may sow their land, and plant vineyards, to yield them fruits of increase. He bleisseth them, so that they multiply exceedingly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. And again: When they are minished and brought low through oppression, &c. though he suffer them to be evil intreated through tyrants, (pouring neglect upon princes) and let them wander in a wayless wilderness; yet helpeth he the poor out of misery, and maketh him households like a flock of sheep.

THIS



THIS is a plain description of his own case, and such as can suit no other\*; and it is all spoke in the style of an experienced man. And, indeed, if this were not so evident from the nature of the thing, his manner of introducing this reflection sufficiently shews, that it related to himself. He observes, that GOD *maketh a fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*--Again, says he: *He maketh the wilderness a standing water, &c.* The nature of the antitheses plainly shews, that as GOD, *for the sins of men, makes a fruitful land barren*; so, for their piety and righteousness, he turns barrenness into culture. But the case being notoriously his own, he carefully forbore the least hint of piety or righteousness, lest he should be thought to vaunt his own merits. And, as to his ascribing all this to the agency of GOD, no man that considers the piety of his style, will, for that reason, think it necessary to preclude the interposition of second causes, or human agency.

IDLENESS, with regard to honest industry, is ordinarily the effect of vicious habits; and therefore it is no wonder, if *Canaan* was, from the days of its antient inhabitants, in the condition of the sluggard's vineyard, over-run with thorns and thistles; especially considering the

\* If this opinion needed any support, we might derive a probable confirmation of it from what *Eusebius* tells us, that in his time there was, in the forest of *Arith*, a village called *Arath*, to the west of *Elia*, (so *Jerusalem* was then called) in which, say, he *David* resided.

desolations consequent to the ensuing and almost incessant wars.

THE *Canaanites*, who inhabited this land, before the days of *Joshua*, were, without doubt, the wickedest, the most abandoned race of mortals upon the face of the earth! And I believe it will be allowed, that all mankind are idle and negligent of culture in proportion to their wickedness. Industry, and the honest arts of life, have a natural force to abate and restrain the unruly appetites, and evil tendencies, of the mind; whereas idleness lets them all loose, and indulges their excesses.

Now idleness, in this view, (and indeed in every view) is great guilt; and we know, that briars and thorns are, in a great measure, the fruits of God's original curse upon guilt: and therefore GOD may, with great propriety, be said to make a *fruitful land barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*

ON the other hand, industry (I mean in things honest) is virtue; and the means appointed by GOD himself, if not, in some measure, to expiate the original guilt of man, at least to check its progress. And, therefore, when, by this industry, exerted in hope, and in an humble dependence upon GOD for a blessing upon it, a barren land is made fruitful? GOD, without whose influence no industry can avail, may, in the style of a man truly religious, very properly be said to do all this; because the means are of his appointment, and the end the effect of his influence.

THIS

THIS reasoning best accounts both for this psalm, and for that vast number of wilds and forests which protected *David* in the days of *Saul*; and, at the same time, makes it credible, that a man of so active, so improving, and so generous a spirit, as *David* was, who choose (as all wise men would) to live independent, and would not suffer his men to injure his neighbours, nor allow them in wickedness\*, took this occasion to employ them in culture, and subsist them by it, and took pleasure in the employment.

How dreadful these forests were, when *David* entered into them, may easily be imagined: at least, may well be collected from the 4th verse of the xxiii<sup>d</sup> psalm: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.* What noble painting is this! For, surely, the valley of such a forest, with all its gloomy horrors, inhabited only by bears, and lions, and tygers, (whose dens are in the deepest shades) is, with infinite beauty, styled, *The valley of the shadow of death.*

THIS necessity that *David* lay under, of flying into this forest, laid him also under a necessity of cultivating it, as well as he could, for subsistence, and likewise of destroying the savages that infested it. And this great benefaction to the whole neighbourhood did, in some measure, open him the way to empire, as it did to *Nimrod.*

\* See *Psal. ci. I will not know a wicked person, &c.*



How providentially advantageous to *David* was this persecution, at the same time that it appeared so grievous! To drive him from place to place, and from tribe to tribe; what was it, but to exhibit him more extensively beneficent to them all! What was it, but to render his patience, his piety, his temperance, his fortitude, more conspicuous! and by that means, to open him the way to empire! What was it, but more effectually to exhibit him, in this respect, a true type of that blessed Being, *who went about doing good!*

How other men may think, I cannot say; but to minds early habituated to rural amusements, the culture of a desert, conquering difficulties, reclaiming nature, bettering and beautifying the scene we are placed in, seems to have something in it infinitely agreeable to a spirit truly heroic and beneficent.

I MIGHT add, too, something not unpleasing to that great Artificer, who formed a world of such amazing and exquisite beauty and contrivance from *chaos*. Nor have I often been better pleased, than with the reflection of a plain man, upon the improvements of a gentleman in his neighbourhood: he told him, *He believed that work was very agreeable to GOD*. And being asked why? he answered, *It was adorning his creation*.

THAT spirit of culture, which now employed *David* in reclaiming a desert, is, in truth, the same which, in other heroes, exerted itself in works of more magnificence; building cities, bridges,

bridges, and aqueducts; cutting canals, and carrying ways through impassable mountains and morasses. Beneficence sways in both: but with this difference, that vanity is too much tempted to predominate in the one; and nothing but conscious virtue, and secret humble satisfaction, in the other.

THIS, at least, will be allowed; that as the greatest heroes have always been careful to find full employment for their armies; such a culture as we now speak of, and as I think may be clearly inferred from the fore-cited psalm, was the best way to employ, to support, and to preserve, such a number of men, as *David* then had, in health and innocence. Would to God that great numbers of men, otherwise useless and vicious, were always so employed, and so supported!

NOR were these *David's* only advantages in those savage recesses. A thinking man finds something in every scene to enlarge his mind; and a good man, to improve his piety. That *David* derived both these advantages from his sojourning among wilds and forests, is well seen from many of his psalms; particularly the civ<sup>th</sup>, where, after some general observations upon the works and wisdom of God in the creation, he descends to the following particulars; the rise of springs, the course of rivers, the retreats of fowls, and wild beasts of the forests and mountains; the vicissitudes of night and day, and their various uses to the animal world; the dependence of the whole creation upon the Almighty, for being  
and

and subsistence! He withdraws their breath, and they die; he breathes, and they revive; he but opens his hand, and he feeds, he satisfies them all at once. These are ideas familiar to him, and his manner of introducing them plainly shews them the effect of his most retired meditations in his solitary wandrings.

NONE but one who had himself surveyed the venerable shades, and stupendous size, of the cedars of *Libanus*, could entertain those exalted conceptions of them, which *David* here does, (and Dr. *Huntington* also, with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, did in the last century) that they were planted by the hand of God\*. None but one who had himself been refuged in the *hills of the wild goats*, could so well, and so familiarly, contemplate upon the ends of the Divine Wisdom, in forming those solitary sanctuaries.

It were endless to enumerate particulars; and I shall only beg leave to add, that none but one well acquainted with the fierce inhabitants of the forest, their roving and roarings, could so describe them, as *David* doth in the 20th, 21st and 22d verses of this psalm: *Thou makest darkness, that it may be night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. The lions, roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens.*

THE time of *David's* continuance in this forest is no where told us: but from the time

\* *The cedars of Libanus, which thou hast planted.*



necessarily taken up in the culture of it, and from the bitterness of *Saul's* complaint to his servants and soldiers that were about him, that none of them gave him any information of the combination of his son and slave against him, the space must have been pretty considerable; it being evident, that he had no intelligence of *David's* motions at the time of his complaint: he seems to have known nothing of him more than his being in exile somewhere in the country; nay, not so much as his having gotten a body of men about him.

DAVID, doubtless, must have been well beloved with a people to whom he was so great a benefactor; and, as such, he was well concealed: and, besides this, his intelligence was so good, that if any were inclined, yet few would dare to discover him. At last, news was brought to *Saul*, that *David* was certainly known to have a number of armed men about him.

IT should seem, from the text, that he had long impatiently waited for this information; and, in the mean time, had all things in readiness to pursue his vengeance at a moment's warning. And, surely, his situation in these circumstances is finely painted in the text: *Now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him.*

I THINK it evident from hence, that he had left his house, and *resided* or *dwelt* (for so the *Hebrew* word signifies) in the open air, with a flying camp, of chosen men about him, intent  
upon

upon pursuing *David*; as *Mithridates* was upon his game, who (as we are told) was so keen an huntsman, that he never slept under the roof of an house for seven years together\*.

SAUL was now as eagerly bent upon vengeance, as *Mithridates* was (or, at least, appeared to be) upon pleasure; and, with this view, had fixed himself upon an eminence, that gave him a prospect of the country far and wide; always in a readiness to rush down upon *David*, wherever he should hear he was. I own, in this situation, he gives me the idea of an eagle, that rises as high as he can in the air, to see, and to dart down, to more advantage, upon his prey. And I submit it to the reader, whether *David* also did not consider *Saul* in that light, when he considers himself *as a partridge upon the mountains*.

How finely hath *Solomon* described that malignant spirit which now reigned in this unhappy prince! *They sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they have made some to fall.*

As soon as *Saul* had received the intelligence of *David's* being in arms, and joined by such considerable men of the several tribes, his guilt gave him the alarm. He knew *Jonathan's* friendship for *David*, and immediately concluded, that he must be in combination against him; nay, more, that the conspiracy was general; that even his own tribe, and his own servants, were joined in it: upon which occasion, he thus addressed

\* *Justin.* l. xxxvii. c. 2.

himself to them (1 Sam. xxii. 7, 8.): *Hear now, ye Benjamites; Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me, that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?*

THIS complaint consists of several parts: and were it just, as it was grievous, *Saul* were indeed to be lamented; to be betrayed by his own servants, and his own tribe, in favour of a fellow-servant, and of another tribe! To be betrayed by his son, in favour of his slave; nay, to have that slave excited against him by his son! this were, indeed a pitiable calamity! But the truth is, *Saul* had no grounds for this suspicion, but the consciousness of his having deserved what he dreaded.

HE then proceeds, in the true spirit of a tyrant, to brand *David's* arming in his own necessary defence, with the character of treachery, and lying in wait for his master. Such is the treachery of the lamb, that flies from the wolf's pursuit, to the protection of his keeper, or the traveller that resists the robber. And yet, false and fallacious as the complaint was, it found an abettor. What tyrant ever wanted more than one abettor of his iniquity?



THE *Benjamites*, indeed, could neither accuse *Jonathan*, nor themselves; they knew their own innocence, and they had no reason to suspect his: there was no such combination between him and *David*; or, if there were, they could not be conscious to it: but *Doeg* the *Edomite* (chief of *Saul's* herdsmen) now found a fair occasion to accuse another person, not less innocent.

HE had, it seems, been detained at the tabernacle, (upon some pretence of piety) when *David* resorted to *Abimelech* the high-priest, for relief in distress. And though *Doeg* well knew *Abimelech* acted in that whole matter with integrity, and without the least guile, or evil intentions to *Saul*; yet he well knew, at the same time, that he should pay his court to advantage by accusing him: and therefore, concealing every circumstance of truth, that could acquit the high-priest of treachery, he openly accuses him of aiding and abetting the king's enemy, supplying him with victuals, and a sword, and consulting God for him! *I saw the son of Jesse* (said he) *coming to Nob, to Abimelech the son of Abitub; and he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.*

HERE it is observable, that as *David* now became a name of honour, from the owner's distinguished merit; for *his name* (as the text tells us) *was much set by\**, like that of *Cæsar* or *Alexander* in after-ages) and carried dignity

\* 1 *Sam.* xviii. 30.

in the sound; *Saul* could not bear to pronounce it; but chose rather to change it for the appellation of *the son of Jesse*, whose name, being that of an obscure mean man, carried rather, as he imagined, the ideas of reproach and indignity. And now *Doeg* (not the worse courtier for being a very bad man) easily fell into the imitation and echo of his master's phrase.

No sooner had *Doeg* ended his accusation, but immediately *Ahimelech*, and all his associates, to the number of eighty-five persons, are summoned to court, and charged (as we now phrase it) with treason, for abetting, assisting, and protecting the king's enemy, and (as he called it) for conspiring against him. How uniform is the conduct of tyrants! This, *Tacitus* tells us, was, in his time, the only accusation of all those who were clear of all guilt\*.

THE high-priest answered to the charge, in the simplicity of his heart, That he had, indeed, aided *David*, the king's son-in-law †, and consulted GOD for him, and thought his distinguished merits and fidelity to the king sufficiently justified him in doing so; and that he had done nothing now, but what he had done before, without the least charge or suspicion of guilt; nay, in truth, it was what he was bound to do

\* *Unicum crimen eorum, qui omni crimine vacabant.*

† This was such a defence as *M. Terentius* makes for his friendship to *Sejanus*. *Tacit. Annal. l. 6. Non enim Sejanum Vulsinienfem, sed Claudix & Julix domus partem, quas affinitate occupaverat: Tuum, Cæsar, generum, ubi consulis socium, tua officia in republicâ capeffentem, colebamus.*

for the king's service, and what it would be reasonable to decline.

THE answer was just and true, and *Saul* knew it to be so; but, however, it was expedient, (as *Saul's* circumstances then stood) that there should be a plot. A plot, defeated at a dangerous juncture, is a new confirmation of power! perhaps too it was expedient, that a priest should be in it, or, it may be, the whole order, that the whole order should be humbled; whose endowments might be dreaded, and possessions envied, and whose forfeitures might turn to good account; and therefore, without any more trial or eviction, *Ahimelech* and all his brethren are consigned to the sword. A fatality which hath, from that day to this, attended the priests of God, to be all involved, more or less, however innocent, in the guilt (whether real or imputed) of every one of their order.

WHETHER *Saul* learnt this cruelty from the *Persians*, of punishing every one of the family for the supposed guilt of one, or taught it to them, I cannot say. This only we know, that the practice was no way authorized or countenanced by the *Jewish* constitution or policy, as it was by the *Persian*, and as it is at this day by that of *Japan*.

BUT *Saul's* cruelty did not stop here. Not content to extirpate all the priests of *Nob* at once, (one only excepted, who escaped we know not how) he smote the whole city with the edge of the sword, both men and women, (saith the text) children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses,



*asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.* And I doubt not but one reason of this indiscriminate cruelty was, that not one of the priests should escape.

THIS man, who was, some time before, so delicate in point of piety, as to decline extirpating the *sinners* the *Amalekites*, and destroying their cattle, even at the express command of GOD, without reserving something for sacrifice, now made thorough destruction; nor could less than an intire carnage content him. He that before spared the murderous *Agag*, the enemy of GOD, now massacres the innocent *Abimelech*; and the rest of his priests, without remorse! And when his men of war refused to be employed in so base a butchery\*, *Doeg*, his informer, (*taking to him, says Josephus, some assistants as wicked as himself*) became his executioner.

KINGS, says the learned Dr. *Patrick*, never want some to execute their commands, though never so bloody. *Saul* was little better than a madman, and yet had those at his beck that would do as he bid them. It was excellently therefore said by *Justin Martyr*, *Let us pray, that kings and rulers, together with a royal power, may be found having a sober mind.*

\* In this (says *Le Clerc*) doubtless they were praiseworthy; but had been more so, had they dissuaded and remonstrated against this cruelty, as contrary to all the laws of GOD and man! And if their reasons and prayers proved ineffectual, they should have treated this command as the dictate of *Sau's* melancholy, and removed these innocent men out of his way, until he came to himself; and not left their fellow-subjects a prey to these alien guards, the usual ministers of tyranny.

AND here I cannot but observe, that *Saul* seems to me to have treated the word *priest*, on this occasion, as if it had been a term of reproach; for, when he commands them to be massacred, his expression is,—*Turn and slay the priest of the Lord*. And, again; when the soldiers refused the butchery, *Turn thou* (says he to *Doeg*) *and fall upon the priests*. Whereas, had he shewn the least reverence to their character, I think he should have chosen rather to have mark'd them by their guilt, than by their function; and spoken of them on this occasion, under any other appellation, such as that of enemies, traitors, &c. But, possibly, it was the fashion of the times, to treat the most venerable name among men with contempt, or he had a mind to have it so. Whether this be a surer mark of great impiety, or great politeness, the reader will best judge for himself; as he will best learn from the *history of the world*, how far men of this turn (scoffers of sacred things and characters) have been remarkably blessed or cursed in themselves and their posterity. Even kings would do well to remember, that whatever rightful power they may have over priests, as their subjects, *God*, whose priests they are, hath yet more over them.

*Regum timendorum in proprios greges,  
Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.*

Kings claim obedience from the flocks they rule;  
But *Jove's* dominion sways the sceptred king.

Two ends *Saul* attained by this massacre: first, that he weakened the power of the priests, whom he had made his enemies, by slaying such a number of them, and stripping the order of their possessions; and, secondly, that he strengthen'd the hands of his own family, and confirmed the faith of his tribe, then doubtful, by conferring those possessions upon them: for there seems to be no other reason, besides that already mentioned, why all the inhabitants of the city were destroyed, but that their possessions might be made a prey; unless it were, that his enmity against GOD, for depriving him of his kingdom, carried him not only to destroy his priests, but also the *Nethinims* and *Gibeonites*, (if these were different orders of men) that so the tabernacle of GOD, then at *Nob*, might be utterly destitute of all kind of attendance! And this best accounts for what *Josephus* tells us, that *Doeg, taking some men as wicked as himself to his assistance, slew three hundred and eighty-five persons.*

I SHALL conclude this point with one short observation, which hath scarce escaped any of the commentators:

HERE we have a remarkable instance of GOD's turning the worst devices of the wicked to the purposes of his Providence! *Eli* had grievously offended GOD; *because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* For this reason, GOD denounced his vengeance against his race; and declared, that they should be cut off by a sudden and surprising destruction in one day, (1 *Sam.* chap. ii. iii.)



and the priesthood transferred to another family. And now the former part of the denunciation was fulfilled, by *Saul's* unparallel'd cruelty; and the latter, in a way which belongs not to this history to explain.

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## C H A P. XIV.

*The Siege of Keilah raised by David, and the Philistines defeated. What Return the Men of Keilah intended to make him for this Benefaction.*

THE person mentioned in the last chapter to have escaped from the slaughter of the priests, is *Abiathar* the son of *Akimelech*. The most probable account of this escape, is thus; That, being left to keep the sanctuary, whilst his father, and the rest of the priests, went to wait upon *Saul*, (for it was not to be imagined, that the tabernacle was left wholly unattended by any one of the order at that time) he, upon the first notice of their destruction, made his escape; and, having no other recourse, fled to *David* for protection, to whom he related the destruction of the LORD'S priests.

DAVID received him, as he was bound to do the son of his benefactor and friend; of whose destruction, and that of his whole house, he had been the unhappy occasion: *And David*  
*said*

*said unto Abiathar, (1 Sam. xxii. 22, 23.) I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me; fear not; for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.*

DAVID knew, that their enemy, and their danger, was the same: but he had firm trust in GOD, that he should, in the end, be safe delivered from that enemy; and therefore promised *Abiathar* his protection with greater confidence.

ON this occasion he composed the liid psalm; which begins in the style of a man filled with indignation and sorrow, and breaks out into the justest and bitterest question that ever was put to tyrants! *Why boastest thou thyself, O man of power\*, that thou canst do mischief? whereas the goodness of God is from day to day!*

A KING is the representative of GOD upon earth; and his duty, to imitate the divine goodness! to protect, and to bless.—A tyrant reverses this glorious resemblance; and employs that power to all the purposes of mischief, which was only bestowed for those of beneficence.

I AM sensible that interpreters understand this psalm as relating only to *Doeg*; and, I own, the greater part of it relates solely to him; but, with great submission, this first verse, which, I

\* This translation is more literal, and more agreeable to the decency of *David's* style, who was careful to avoid the last appearance of disrespect, in all his treatment of *Saul*.

think can only relate to *Saul*, sufficiently proves, that he also was glanced at, as he well deserved.

DAVID'S next adventure is, I think, one of the noblest of his whole life, and, perhaps, the most extraordinary of any recorded in history!

THE *Philistines* (probably encouraged by *David's* disgrace, and *Saul's* distraction) invaded *Judah*, and besieged *Keilah*, wasting the country all around it. Another man in *David's* place would have rejoiced at this invasion, and, perhaps encouraged it; and this both from self-preservation and policy: first, because he had nothing to fear for himself, whilst *Saul* had such an enemy upon his hands; and, secondly, because the distress of his country was the likeliest means to bring *Saul* to reason, and force him to recal, and be reconciled to, his best champion. But *David* was governed by other than these narrow views! nor safety nor honour were desirable to him, purchased by the distress of his country and his friends. His bosom beat with an eager desire to relieve *Keilah*: but it was not an adventure to be unadvisedly undertaken; and therefore we are assured (1 *Sam.* xxii.) that he enquired of God, saying, *Shall I go and smite these Philistines?*

THIS is, to me, one of those passages of Scripture that give evidence of their own truth. None but a hero could put the question! and none but God could resolve it: *Had the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.*



BUT still his men thought the undertaking too desperate, and loudly disclaimed it, saying, *Behold, we be afraid here in Judah; how much more then, if we come to Keilah, against the armies of the Philistines?*

THEY had more than difficulty enough to defend themselves against *Saul*, where they were; and could it be less than madness, to provoke more and greater armies? Doubtless *Saul* would send forces to beat off the *Philistines*, and then they should be pent in between two hostile armies. And yet, notwithstanding all this, *David* undertook and atchieved the adventure; which it was impossible he should, against such fears, and such reasonings of his forces, from any motive, other than the assurance of divine protection and aid: which fully confirms the Scripture-account of this matter, that he did not undertake it, until he had, for the fuller satisfaction of his associates, again consulted, and was again assured of success by, the divine oracle; or, to speak more properly, by the intercession of the prophet *Gad*; for *Abiathar*, who had the ephod, had not yet reached him.

DAVID'S success, on this occasion, was very extraordinary; he saved the city, and the inhabitants; he delivered the country all around from the ravages of the enemy; he smote the *Philistines* with a great slaughter, and brought away their cattle: by which means he was enabled to subsist himself, and his forces, without being a burden to his country.

ONE would imagine, that this extraordinary success, and deliverance of so great a city, might secure *David* a safe retreat among the men of *Keilah*: but it was not so; such is the nature of man, present dangers quickly obliterate past obligations! Gratitude is, without question, a most lovely virtue; but seldom lives in the extremes either of adversity or success! it is like those fine colours, which storms and sunshine equally deface.

DAVID, who judged of other mens generosity by his own, hoped he should be protected in *Keilah*; and *Saul* who judged in the same manner of their baseness, believed he should not: and therefore, the Scripture assures us, that he rejoiced upon receiving the news of *David's* being shut up there (1 *Sam.* xxiii. 7.): *And it was told Saul, that David was come to Keilah: and Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.*

I KNOW no one thing more grating to a good ear, than strains of piety from a profane mouth; to hear a wretch, who had despised the commands of GOD, murdered his priests, and desolated his sanctuary! in a word lived in open defiance of the Divinity! to hear such a wretch talk of GOD, and divine determinations in his favour, is beyond enduring! Doubtless, his reasoning was right; and had he left out his hypocrisy, nothing could be objected to it.

UPON the news of *David's* being shut up in *Keilah*, *Saul* immediately set himself to raise a  
great

great army, and go against it; and at the same time, sent secret emissaries to seduce the inhabitants, believing it impossible, that they could hold out against the united power of terror and treachery.

DAVID'S security hitherto arose, in a great measure, from the swiftness and secrecy of his motions, and the obscurity of his retreats: but now *Saul* rightly judged, that the same walls and gates which protected him, shut him in; and neither they, nor their keepers, were impregnable.

DAVID was doubtful upon the point: he had certain intelligence, that *Saul* was determined to besiege him\*; and he also found out, that *Saul* was secretly practising against him within the city; and he knew not what might be the issue of his machinations, and therefore resolved wholly to rely upon the divine direction. He put up his earnest prayers to GOD, to be resolved what to do in this exigency; and he inquired of him (as it is generally understood) by *Abiathar* (who reached him about this time, with the *Ephod*, and *Urim* and *Thummim*); and GOD, who never fails those that put their trust in him, and, with humble and fervent faith, implore his protection, relieved him in his distress, and assured him, the men of *Keilah* would deliver him up. Upon which he arose, he and his men, (being now about six hundred) and de-

\* This appears evidently from his prayer:—O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard, that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.



parted from the city †, not knowing whither to turn himself.

AND here, methinks, is an event, that will easily solve that hard question in the schools, about the consistency of the divine prescience with human free-will.

A GOOD politician, that was let into the course of *Saul's* secret practices with the men of *Keilah*, and had fair opportunities of sifting their dispositions upon the point, might fairly pronounce upon the event: How much more then that All-seeing God, who *searcheth the secrets of the heart, and seeth the thought afar off!* seeth them in all their secret workings, tendencies, and temptations, and through all their mazes and masks!

WHEN *Saul* heard of *David's* escape from *Keilah*, having no further intelligence of his measures, he forbore to pursue him.

THE treachery of the men of *Keilah* to *David* hath given the critics occasion to observe, how much more honourable the behaviour of the *Athenians* was to their guardians, their orators! whom no threats could oblige them to give up to the resentments of *Alexander*.

† Now is it that his men were increased to six hundred; which grounds a conjecture, that the reputation of his bravery and conduct in this last expedition, added to that accession of wealth, which he had gained by the spoil of the *Philistines*, now attached a considerable number of men, all chosen warriors, to his interest.

## C H A P. XV.

*David flies to the Wilderness of Ziph, where he hath an Interview with Jonathan. The Ziphites inform Saul of his Haunts, who eagerly pursues him.*

WHEN *David* and his men departed from *Keilah*, the text tells us, that they went whithersoever they could go. So that, had he been asked, where he intended to shelter himself, he might have answered, as *Luther* did to the same question, when proscribed by the emperor, and excommunicated by the pope, *Sub cælo*, Somewhere under the cope of heaven.

BLESSED be GOD, his protection is not to be precluded by proscriptions, nor confined by excommunications! I mean, such as are wicked and unjust. Let the sinner, nevertheless, beware of the righteous sentence, that shuts him out from the divine ordinances. This I am sure of, that *David* often laments his exclusion from them, though altogether involuntary and unavoidable.

AFTER *David* and his men had shifted for some time from place to place, (we cannot say how long) they took up their residence in the mountainous wilderness of *Ziph*; of which we know no more, than that it was within the precincts of the tribe of *Judah*, (for there, as it was natural, *David* thought himself most in safety)

and

and upon the confines of *Edom*\*. It is supposed to have had its name from the *Hebrew* word *Zepbeth*, pitch, with which it is said to have abounded †; and it had the advantage of some woods and strong-holds.

SAUL continually sent out parties, and at last went out himself in search of him: but to no purpose; for GOD, as the text most properly expresses it, *delivered him not into his hand*.

WHEN *David* was shut up in *Keilah*, *Saul* confidently pronounced, *God hath delivered him into mine hand*. And here the sacred penman, to shew the vanity of that ill-grounded confidence, expressly declares, that GOD delivered him not into his hand; though the text assures us, that *Saul sought him every day*.

BUT though *Saul* could not find him, *Jonathan* could; and took this opportunity of his father's absence to go in quest of his friend, to commune with him, to console and to support him, the best he could, in his afflictions, to give him new assurances and pledges of his affection, and to confirm him by a new ratification of their former covenant; for love delights as much to iterate assurances of fidelity, as doubt or distrust can do.

As the interview with *David* could not be brought about without the greatest danger to *Jonathan's* life, there is no doubt but they took the greatest precautions to keep it well concealed.

\* *Josh.* xv. 24.

† This is the more probable, if, as some place it, it was situate in the confines of the lake *Asphaltites*.



They met in a wood; and we may be well assured, that the time, the place, and the mutual danger, suggested, to such friends as they were, a thousand fresh occasions of renewing, and, if possible, increasing their endearments.

As they now once more renewed the solemn and sacred covenant they had long since entered into, it is probable, that, for more solemnity, as well as mutual satisfaction, they did this in the presence of *Abiathar* the priest, and *Gad* the prophet of GOD; and it is to be presumed, they had few, if any other, witnesses of their conference.

THIS adventure, in the hands of a profane author, would make a most delightful episode! When we hear of two such men, meeting at such a place, and on such an occasion, our curiosity is raised to the height, and our imaginations are at work; and no writer could be so insensible and unanimated, as not to take delight in indulging both himself and us, if he were not tied down to a strict and inviolable adherence to the truth. And hence it is, that, as the sacred penman, probably, knew no more than he related, and would relate only what he knew, we know no more of this conference, than what *David* could not but report, both in prudence, and in justice to his friend, that *he strengthened his hand in God*; that is, comforted and confirmed him in the assurance of the divine protection and deliverance, and exaltation to the kingdom in the end: *Fear not* (said he); *the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king*

king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul my father knoweth\*.

IT were hard to determine, which we ought most to admire upon this occasion, the moderation, the friendship, the piety, or the unexampled generosity of *Jonathan*. To be able to resign a kingdom with that calmness, that frankness, that tender love and inviolable fidelity to his rival, and that steady submission to the will of God, seems to have something in it infinitely beyond all the other praises of heroism.

How concisely, and yet how completely, are the characters of two such men as *Saul* and *Jonathan*, summed up in that just reflection of *Hecuba*, in *Euripides*!

Ὁ μὲν πονηρὸς ἐστὲν ἄλλο πλὴν κακός.  
Ὁ δ' ἐθλὸς, ἐθλὸς ἐστὶ συμφορᾶς ὑπὸ  
φύσιν διέφθειγ', ἀλλὰ χρεῖς ἐστ' αἰε'.

*The malice-blasted man is wholly bad ;  
The good man, good ; nor, on the score of loss,  
Or danger, will he taint his noble nature ;  
Benevolent, and permanent in good.*

\* 1 Sam xxiv. 20. Though this matter never came to a trial, yet I own, I cannot help being in some pain for the continuance of this union, in such a subordination ; though there are instances (but few indeed) of the continuance of such an union, where, perhaps, it is less to be expected, in an equal participation of power. Such, or something like it, was that of *Adrian* and *Antoninus Pius* ; as also that of *Frederic* and *John*, dukes of *Saxony*, quoted by the learned Dr. *Trapp* from *Exner* ; who, as they dwelt both in one and the same house, so their mutual love, grew to the last, *in utriusque periculis, & gravissimis deliberationibus, dum omnia in republica communicatis sententiis constituebant.*

WHEN these excellent friends had communed as they thought fit, and confirmed their covenant anew, *David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.*

THE felicity of these friends is well worth our notice. They had a cruel and a watchful tyrant to deal with; and yet they kept up a continual intercourse with one another, without any instance of treachery in any one of all those they trusted.

DAVID had not long sojourned in this wilderness, when the *Ziphites*, probably the inhabitants of the neighbouring city of the same name, came up to *Saul*, to *Gibeah*, to inform him of his haunts, and to incite him to come out against him: *Doth not David (say they) hide himself with us in strong-holds, in the wood, in the hill of Hackilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be, to deliver him to the king's hand.*

THEY knew the eagerness of the king's desire to get *David* into his hands; and therefore they press him to make expedition agreeably to that eagerness. To this he answers, with all the kindness of a man greatly obliged, and all the smoothness of a glozing hypocrite; *Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know, and see his place, where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there; for it is told me, that he dealeth*



very subtilly\*. See, therefore, and take knowledge of the lurking places, where he hideth himself; and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

SAUL was now resolved to make sure work; and therefore he would not beat up this poor partridge upon the mountains, (as David calls himself) till he had spread his nets all around him; till he had disposed his spies throughout all the thousands of Judah, and taken his measures so, that it was impossible that he should escape him.

WHAT intelligence he received after this from the Ziphites, is not told us: but from the eagerness with which they entered into all his impotence of revenge, there is little doubt of their having soon sent him the best they could get; for we find, that he soon after came out against

\* Here is that fine observation of *Horace* verified:

*At nos virtutes ipsas invertimus - - - -*  
*- - - - - hic fugit omnes*  
*Infidias, nullique malo latus obdit apertum?*  
*(Cum genus hoc inter vita versetur, ubi acris*  
*Invidia, atque vigent ubi crimina) pro bene sano,*  
*Ac non incauto, fidum astutumque vocamus.*

Sat. 3. l. 1.

One shuns the snares that subtil malice laid,  
 Nor will unguarded bare his breast to ill:  
 Should he within those regions chance to live,  
 Where envy dwells, and ev'ry guilt prevails,  
 His wise precaution, and his solid sense,  
 Are branded with the names of guile and craft.

*David*

*David* with his forces, and well knew where to find him. *David* was then in the plain of the wilderness of *Maon*; whither *Saul*, according to his intelligence, pursued him: which when *David* learned, (for he also wanted no proper intelligence) he forsook the plain, and took to the mountains: whither *Saul* also pursued him with all diligence.

DAVID was on one side of the mountain, making all possible speed to get away; and *Saul* on the other, pursuing, and extending both wings of his army to encompass him, when news was brought him in all haste, that the *Philistines* had invaded (in the original it is, *poured themselves out upon*) the land, and were putting all to fire and sword! This stopped him short, and turned him from an enemy who did no mischief to his country, to repel one that wasted it.

THUS was *David* delivered, by the timely interposition of Providence, from one of the most imminent dangers of his whole life.

To this refer that prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, which makes up the livth psalm: all the parts of which the very learned Dr. *Patrick* applies, with great judgment, to the present occasion.

THE three first verses of it are a petition of deliverance from his enemies, then in full pursuit of him\*; and spoken in the style of a man, who, in full reliance upon the protection of

\* *Save me, O Lord, for thy name's sake: avenge me in thy strength, &c —for strangers are risen up against me; and tyrants, which have not God before their eyes, seek after my soul.*

GOD, was resolved to sell his life as dear as he could. And to shew, that he thought himself justified in doing so, he calls these men, who thus wickedly attempted to take it away, strangers; that is, heathens, and aliens from the covenant of GOD; and determines to treat them as such.

THE 4th verse begins upon seeing his enemies stop short; in full assurance, that GOD had heard his prayer, and interposed on his behalf: *Behold,—God is my helper*\*! concluding, in the 7th verse, (not well understood in the *English* translation) to this purpose; that GOD had delivered him out of all his streights, (for, doubtless, it was a distressful dilemma to be forced either to die tamely, or fight his sovereign, and his own people) and that he could now, calmly and confidently, survey those enemies, whom before he did not dare to look in the face †.

THE prayers of great men in distress, and their thanksgivings after great deliverances, have always been matter of uncommon delight to curiosity, and men of serious and religious spirits! Nor does the glory of any great man ever shine out to their eyes in half the lustre, as when they behold him upon his knees, lifting up his eyes, or stretching out his hands to

\* *Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with them that uphold my soul, &c.*

† *God hath snatched me out of every stright;—and on mine enemies hath mine eye seen, that is, as the Arabic explains it, resisted.*



heaven; or, what is yet greater, prostrating himself before it, in humiliation and acknowledgment. Then is the hero seen in all his dignity! And in this light it must be owned, that *Henry* the fourth of *France* before the battle of *Ivry*\*, and *Henry* the fifth of *England* after that of *Agincourt* †, and *David* after this deliverance, appear with a grandeur very superior to that of either a *Cæsar* or an *Alexander*! The latter, in their height of glory, were but mere rulers of men; but the former, upon their knees, the dependents and the friends of God.

FROM this event of *Saul's* being called off by the *Philistine* invasion, the mountain, which

\* *Davila* relates, that the king, standing still at the head of the main battalion, joining his hands, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said so loud, that he was heard by many; *O Lord, thou knowest the intentions of my heart, and with the eye of thy Providence thou piercest into the secretest of my thoughts. If it be best for this people, that I should attain the crown, which belongs to me by right, do thou favour and protect the justice of my arms: but if thy will hath determined the contrary, if thou takest away my kingdom, take away my life also at the same time, that I may shed my blood fighting at the head of these who put themselves in danger for my sake.*

† Before the battle, he told his army, among other things, That though these (the lance, the ax, the sword, and the bow) were the brave instruments to reap honour, yet he relied upon Omnipotence for the victory; and it was a remarkable effect of Divine Providence, that their enemies offered them battle on the very day appointed in *England* for the people to implore a blessing on their arms: so that at the time that they were fighting, the whole body of the *English* nation were lifting up their eyes and hands to heaven for their success and safety—And when the battle was over, this truly great prince, sensible of the divine goodness to him, directed the cxxvth psalm to be sung; and at that verse, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory*, he commanded his whole army at once to prostrate themselves to the ground, in token of humiliation and gratitude, and he himself set them the example.

then parted him from *David*, was from thenceforward called *Selahammalekoth*. *The Rock of Divisions*; a name which *Osiander* thinks *David* gave it, in gratitude for this deliverance, as a memorial, that GOD had there, by little less than a miracle, divided his enemy from him\*.

## C H A P. XVI.

*The Vineyards of Engedi, in all Probability, planted by David. The Adventure of the Cave explained.*

WHEN *David* was delivered from *Saul*, as related in the last chapter he departed, and took up his retreat in the strong-holds of *Engedi*, now called *Angued* †: here he resided during the whole time of *Saul's* pursuing and expelling the *Philistines*.

WHAT time this took up, we cannot say: but from the expression here used, of *David's* dwelling at *Engedi*, it seems to have been no inconsiderable space.

THE word *En-gedi*, signifies, in *Hebrew*, the *Kids fountain*; from whence the neighbouring

\* Possibly this was a rock of one of those mountains which *Solomon* calls the mountains of *Bether* (*Cant.* ii. 17.); which, in the margin of the *Bible*, is interpreted *Divison*.

† *Thevenot's Travels*, part. 1. chap. 47.

region took its name, probably, because there they watered their flocks.

*Eusebius* places it on the confines of the *Dead-sea* to the west. With him, it is famous for excellent balm; and with *Solomon* in his *Song*, for vineyards.

SINCE then it appears from the cvii<sup>th</sup> psalm, that *David* had, in his exile, planted vineyards in the desert, (and vineyards are known to thrive among barren wilds) is it irrational to surmise, that the vineyards of *Engedi* were of his planting, and, for that reason, peculiarly celebrated by his son\*?

THIS opinion is not ill supported by other circumstances. *Solomon* compares his beloved to a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of *Engedi* (*Cant.* i. 14.). If by this he meant, as some interpret it, the garden-cypress; that is said to delight in hot sandy ground, such as may naturally be expected in a desert, and therefore not ill suited to *Engedi*. And if, as others interpret it, the noble balsam-tree peculiar to *Judea* be here meant; *Pliny* tells us, that this antiently grew there only in two royal gardens.

Now *Eusebius* and St. *Jerom* tell us, it grew in the vineyards of *Engedi*; may we not then fairly conclude, that this was antiently a royal garden? And what reason so likely for its being so distinguished, a scene so rude, and so untempting, and of such difficult access, as its having been originally planted by *David*? Nay,

\* Possibly too this may be alluded to, *Cant.* iv. 6. *I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense.*



there is a place still shewn there, in the recess of a low valley, said to have been *Solomon's* garden, called *Hortus Conclusus*, because it is shut in by two high hills.

I AM persuaded, that all readers of refinement take a pleasure in pursuing great men to their retirements; and their curiosity is agreeably gratified, in contemplating upon their amusements and employment in those recesses. For my own part, I must confess, I behold *David* with more pleasure, retiring to a desert, after the conquest of *Goliath*, the relief of *Keilah*, and the repeated defeats of the *Philistines*, there weeding his wilds, planting and pruning his vineyards, and tending his balsam, than I do *Cincinnatus* returning to his plough from his dictatorship, and his triumph! Indeed, the pleasure of attending him thither is very much allayed, by the regret to see him so soon disturbed, and forced to fly once more for his life: for *Saul* was no sooner returned from repelling the *Philistines*, but he inquired eagerly after *David*; and, being told, that he was in the wilderness of *Engedi*, he pursued him thither with three thousand men chosen out of all *Israel*. His intelligence was, that *David* was in that wilderness, and he naturally expected to find him in the most unfrequented recesses and fastnesses of it. And that he went thither in quest of him, is plainly implied in the text, which tells us, that *Saul* went to search for him *upon the faces of the rocks of the wild goats\**; that is, upon the highest

\* 1 Sam, xxiv. 3. *Hebr. Bibl.*

and craggiest cliffs; doubtless, according to the information he had received of *David's* residing there.

DAVID was a soldier, and a master in the trade; and, from his knowledge of *Saul's* skill in the military art, could form a rational conjecture how he would reason, and conduct himself, in this pursuit. He knew very well, that rocks could be surrounded, and fastnesses starved out by a long siege; and therefore he had no way to escape, but by hiding himself in a place where *Saul*, according to the intelligence he had received, and according to all the rules of prudence, and military skill, could have no reason to expect him.

THERE happened to be a large capacious cave on the side of the high-way to these mountains, by the sheep-cotes, the public place of resort to all that fed and milked the flocks, and of consequence the most unlikely place in the world for a fugitive to hide himself in, because the most public and frequented: into this cave, *David*, watching his opportunity, (probably in the dead and silence of the night) stole, with all his followers.

IF he escaped *Saul's* search here, which he had little reason to fear, he then had his choice of two advantages from it; either, when *Saul* was passed by, to steal, in the dead of the night following, into some other part of the country; or else, if he could subsist himself where he was for two or three days, he might, when *Saul* and his army were sufficiently harassed in their wild-

goat chase\*, and obliged to give it over, steal back to those very mountains they had quitted, and effectually elude their search.

How this conduct will be deemed of in a *David*, I cannot say: but am persuaded, that in an *Eumenes*, or a *Sertorius*, it had been crowned with sufficient applause.

WHETHER *Saul* traversed these wildernesses, or what time he might have spent in search of *David*, is not so much as hinted at in the text. We only learn, that as he passed by the cave, where *David* and his men lay, whether oppressed by the heat of the day, or urged by some necessary call of nature, he stept into the cave, as the text expresses it, *to cover his feet*.

IT was easy to discern who he was by the light from without, and by the noise of his attendants; and it is natural to believe, that, upon the first sight of him, *David* and his men concluded themselves betrayed and undone.

WE have a psalm expressly penned by himself, in memory of this adventure; and it is astonishing that no commentator, or writer of sacred history, hath ever applied or explained the adventure by it; especially considering how clear it is with this comment, and how utterly unintelligible without it. All the motions of *David's* mind, on this occasion, his fears, his apprehensions, his prayers to God for deliverance, are very naturally set forth by himself in this psalm.

\* The common expression of *wild-goose chase* I take to be a corruption: beasts only are chased.



UPON the first sight of *Saul* he lifts up his soul in secret prayers and complaints to GOD; concluding, that he was betrayed, and given up: *In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.* And he was confirmed in that persuasion, when, turning about, and looking on his companions, he observed they did not regard him; their minds, as it was natural, were so intirely taken up with their own danger, that they little thought of him. In all probability, they looked (as well they might) pale and disconcerted! Fear hath sometimes all the appearance of guilt, and *David* might well mistake it for such,

*I looked\* on my right-hand, (said he) and saw there was no man that would know me.* What shall he do? He had no refuge, and, as he thought, no man would stand by him: *I had no place, (saith he) and no man cared for my soul!* In this extremity he had no resource but in GOD: *I cried (saith he) unto thee, O Lord, and said; Thou art my hope, and my portion, in the land of the living: consider my complaint; for I am brought very low. O deliver me from my persecutors; for they are too strong for me. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy Name: which thing if thou wilt grant me, then shall the righteous resort into my company.*

\* In the original, it is all a prayer; and in that view much more beautiful. The sense of this verse stands thus:—O Lord, *Look on my right-hand, and see, there is none that knows me.*

HIS prayers were quickly heard, and his terrors removed; for when he saw *Saul* composing himself to rest, instead of attempting upon him, he soon concluded that all was safe. It was then easy for him to see, that he was not betrayed; nay, more, that he and his men were well hid, by the advantage of their situation, in the recess and gloom of the cave; especially considering, that they lay, as the text tells us, *in the sides of it*, where the natural shadowings of the rocks might conceal them. His men also, recovering from their fright, and observing *Saul* in this defenceless condition, soon took heart, and encouraged and urged him, as it was natural, to lay hold of this opportunity, which GOD had put into his hand, to rid himself of his mortal enemy.

NEVER, sure, was man in greater streights than *David* at this juncture. If he complied, it is true, he should get rid of his worst enemy; but, at the same time, he must massacre his father and his king! If he refused, he ran the hazard of provoking his own men to desperation; possibly, so far as to forsake him, and leave him to himself, who refused to serve both himself and them, when it was in his power; especially if there was such a prophecy, (which they seem plainly to refer to) That GOD would deliver *David's enemy into his hands\**: for, in that case, what was this conduct of *David's*, in

\* 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.—*And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayst do to him as it shall seem good to thee.*

effect,

effect, but opposing himself to the divine determinations?

ADD to all this, the danger he ran another way; for, if the least of these whispers or motions had reached *Saul's* ears, the inevitable consequence was death! And, indeed, it is not easy to say, at first sight, why he heard them not, until we come to consider, with some commentators, that, it may be, he was asleep; or, with others, that the whistling of wind, or rustling of leaves, in the mouth of the cave, might have prevented him; or, lastly, the great depth of the recess, or noise of his forces from without.

AND yet, notwithstanding all these dangers, and this remonstrance, *David* could be prevailed upon no further, than to rise, and, going up softly to *Saul*, cut off one of the skirts of his garment; and no sooner had he even done that, but he repented of it: *His heart smote him*, (says the text) *because he cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord!* So *David* stayed his servants or (as the *Hebrew* expresses it) *broke them*, with these words, and suffered them not to rise against *Saul*.

ST. *Chrysoſtom* exerts his usual eloquence on this occasion, in praise of *David's* magnanimity; nor would any eloquence less than his be endured on the occasion. The truth is, encomiums add nothing to it; nor will the generous reader bear to be embarrassed with them.



THE account of *David's* going into this cave, and *Saul's* not expecting him there, seems to me the most natural account of the matter: but the *Rabbins*, who are never contented with nature, and, indeed, seldom even with the letter of Scripture, have added another circumstance from tradition, and, possibly, a true one.

THEY tell us, that, when *Saul* went up to the cave, he went with an intention to search if *David* were in it (than which nothing can be more improbable): but, observing the mouth of the cave overspread with a spider's web, he concluded, that nothing had lately gone into it; and so, declining all thoughts of search, he only stepped in on another occasion.

I SHALL not detain the reader with any disquisition upon the probability of this circumstance; but only observe to him, that there is a much more recent relation of a like escape, from a like cause, in the accounts left us of *Felix* the martyr, whose persecutors, pursuing him to a cave, were stopt short by the interposition of a spider's web: which gave occasion to that pretty reflection of *Paulinus*;

—*Et aërio cessit vis ferrea filo.*

Th'aerial film repell'd the iron force\*.

WHEN *David* returned from cutting off *Saul's* skirt, and restrained his men from doing him violence, *Saul* rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. *David* followed soon

\* The *Arabs* have adopted this relation, and applied it to *Mabomet*.

after; and, when he saw *Saul* at a proper distance, called out, and addressed himself to him in this manner;—*My Lord the KING!*—And when *Saul* looked back, upon hearing himself called, *David* bowed himself down to the earth to do him obeisance, and then proceeded to expostulate with him in the softest and most submissive terms—Why he should listen to the idle reports of such malignant men, as would make him believe, that *David* meant him harm; whereas now he might judge, by his own experience, of the truth of such reports; inasmuch as, a few moments ago, he had him absolutely in his power, and yet would do him no mischief, though earnestly urged to it! Then, holding up the *skirt of the robe*, *My father!* said he, (1 *Sam.* xxiv.) *See, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand! for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand: and I have not sinned against thee, yet thou huntest my soul to take it.* Then, changing his tone, he calls upon God, in a most solemn manner, to judge between them: *The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee: as saith the proverb of the antients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee;* that is, Guilt is the consequence and fruit of guilt: if I had been guilty of conspiring against thee, I should have crowned that guilt by killing thee, when it was in my power.

WHEN he had thus cleared himself to the king, and struck him with a thorough conviction of his innocence, perhaps too with terror of the divine vengeance for the oppression and persecution of innocence! he then returns to the gentleness and submission of his first expostulation; urging, that the king debased himself; that it was beneath the dignity of so great a prince, to pursue so insignificant a creature as he was—  
*After whom is the king of Israel come out? after a dead dog, after a flea?* And then concludes all with a repeated appeal to Almighty God, and an earnest prayer for protection and deliverance.

AND it came to pass, says the text, (1 Sam. xxiv. 16, &c.) *when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lift up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as, when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well, that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand\*, Swear now therefore unto me by*

\* This he knew, says St. Chrysostom, from David's manners, from his kingly virtues, as well as his uncommon success. 'Saul, (says Dr. Trepp) being melted by those coals of kindness, which  
 ' David



by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David swore unto Saul: and Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

SAUL knew, that such magnanimity could not but predominate in the end; he knew how much this act of heroism, added to so many preceding, would make him amiable and admired by the whole world; and, above all, he knew his divine designation to the throne; and therefore he predicted his success.

I SHALL trouble the reader but with two short observations upon this most pathetic speech of *Saul's*.

THE first is, that his sense of *David's* generosity must be very strong, when he beseeches GOD to reward it. Indeed *Saul* had no equivalent to give *David* for the kindness shewn him; and therefore he refers him to GOD for retribution. For if, after this, he should even save *David's* life, yet still he could only save the life of his best benefactor; whereas *David* both spared and saved the life of his most mortal enemy.

THE second is, that *David*, by sparing his enemy, found himself possessed of the proudest

• *David* had heaped upon his head, poureth out himself in a flood  
 • of passionate expressions, and, for the present, spake as he thought:  
 • but good thoughts make but a thorough-fare of wicked hearts;  
 • they stay not there, as those that like not their lodging; their  
 • purposes, for want of performance, are but as clouds without  
 • rain; or as *Hercules's* club in the tragedy, of a great bulk, but  
 • stuffed with moss and rubbish.

pleasure human vanity could wish; to see his prince his petitioner! to see his foe his supplicant! conscious, and confessing his own guilt, and *David's* superiority! and begging that mercy to his issue, which he himself had just experienced, and had not deserved. Who would not save an enemy, for the joy of so glorious a triumph!

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## C H A P. XVII.

*Samuel's Death and Character. David sojourns in the Wilderness of Paran. A Conjecture concerning Orpheus.*

THE last chapter shewed us *Saul* convinced, overwhelmed with *David's* generosity, repentant, and seemingly reconciled; but it was a reconcilment which *David* could not confide in. He had too well experienced *Saul's* unsteadiness in his reconcilments, or, to speak more plainly, his inveterate envy, and invincible aversion; and credulity had now been excess of folly. And therefore the text tells us, that when *Saul* went home, *David and his men gat them up into the hold*: but whether by this he meant some fastness in the mountains of the wild goats, or that hold which he had before possessed in the hill of *Hackilah*, I cannot say. If he returned to *Hackilah*, doubtless he did it to the confusion, and perhaps, in some measure, for the punishment of the *Ziphites*, who basely betrayed him,  
and

and now must receive him again, (and, it may be, subsist him) reconciled to his king. But my opinion is, that he returned with new pleasure to finish his vineyard, and his other improvements, at *Engedi*.

ABOUT this time died the great prophet *Samuel*, in the ninety-seventh or ninety-eighth year of his age; and all the *Israelites* were gathered together, and lamented him, (lamented him for many days, says *Josephus*) and buried him in his house at *Ramah*.

HERE we are to take notice, that the *Jews* had no places of public sepulture; each family had its private sepulchres. And this appears to have been the practice from *Abraham* to *Joseph of Arimathea*. They were, indeed, mostly in fields, and in rocks; and *Samuel* is the first we read of who was buried in his own house\*; though we are afterwards told, that *Joab* was buried in the same manner, 1 *Kings* ii. 34. And the practice might, for aught we know, have been frequent amongst them; as, we are told, it was enjoined the *Thebans*, before they built a house, to build a sepulchre in the place.

SAMUEL had now ruled *Israel* sixteen, or, as others think, twenty years, before the reign of *Saul*; and judged them (that is, was their principal judge) for about forty years after. And it is no wonder, that so righteous a ruler, and so just a judge, should be uncommonly and

\* No more, as I apprehend, is meant by this, but that he was buried at his house, in his garden, probably; for in 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 3. he is said to have been buried *in his own city*.



universally lamented; especially when the wisdom and equity of his government, compared with *Saul's* tyranny and extravagance, made his memory more dear, and his loss more regretted.

HE was now attended by *all Israel* to his grave; and his remains were, many centuries after, removed, with incredible pomp, and almost one continued train of attendants, from *Ramah* to *Constantinople*, by the emperor *Arcadius*, A. D. 401. How singular was the character and the felicity of *Samuel!*

DEVOTED TO GOD from the womb\*, and worthy to be so! Early dedicated to the Divinity, and hallowed by his influence! Descended from prophets, himself a greater!

THE service of his GOD made the early business of his life; nor ever interrupted by any thing, but the service of his country.

THE Scriptures are, I own, the delight of my life; but the pleasure of perusing them is always heightened, when they demonstrate their own veracity.

No man, in his senses, in the vigour of life, and in the age of ambition and avarice, forced by no danger, urged by no guilt, and pressed by no infirmity of mind or body, ever yet, voluntarily, and of his own choice, resigned the supreme power, secluded his sons from the

\* Of him might be said, what was only more applicable to one other man:—*Thou art he that took me out of my mother's womb: thou wast my hope, when I hanged yet upon my mother's breasts. I have been left unto thee ever since I was born: thou art my God even from my mother's womb.* Psal. xxi. 9. 10.

succession\*, and elected two strangers to it, in succession, neither of whom he had ever seen before.

Now *Samuel* did all this; and therefore, when the Scriptures assure me, he did it by the divine command, I cannot help believing them: the narration carries its own irresistible evidence along with it.

HAPPY *Samuel!* exalted to supreme power, without ambition, exerting it without oppression or avarice, and resigning it without reluctance †!

RETIRING (rare felicity!) with undiminished dignity, or, to speak more justly, with added honour, from the concurrent and universal testimony of his country to his equity and incorruption! Oh, would princes so use their power, or so resign it!

ILLUSTRIOUS in the splendor of a throne, and yet more so in the shade of a cell; so far from envying his successor to the supreme power, that he pitied and he prayed for him. He had raised him by the divine favour, but could not restore him.

IT were hard to determine which was happiest, his life, or his death. He lived to the

\* I am sensible, that his sons were complained of, and deserved to be shut out from the succession: but their actual seclusion was only (as far as appears) in consequence of *Saul's* divine designation to the throne.

† If it be objected, that the people desired a king in his stead, I own it: but yet his resignation was not in compliance with their desire, but the divine command. He was the deputy of God, and would and could only resign at his instance; and, when God commanded, he readily obeyed.

noblest purposes, the glory of God, and the good of his country ; and he died full of years and honours, universally lamented and desired.

SUCH was *Samuel* ! Such always were, and such always will be, in a good measure, all those whose beginnings are laid in true religion, whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory !

THE burial of men of eminence, among the *Jews*, was a solemnity of some continuance ; like that of *Jacob*, for whom the *Egyptians*, we are told, mourned *threescore and ten days*. And, as all ranks of people crouded to this solemnity from all parts, *David* found this a fit opportunity to shift his scene, and to pass less noticed into the wilderness of *Paran*, to the south of *Judea*, and to the confines of *Arabia*. Nay, the *Mahometan* writers make it part of *Arabia Deserta* ; and *David* himself is generally thought to own it such, in that dolorous complaint of the cxxth psalm, where he laments his so long continuance \* *in the tents of Kedar*. But that by no means follows ; for he might, upon *Saul's* pursuit, have passed from *Paran* to *Arabia*, and sojourned there a considerable time. But as it was the place of *Ishmael's* residence, it cannot, I think, well be doubted to have been part of *Arabia*.

AND here it is obvious to observe, how little mankind know what to wail or wish for in this world.

\* What is rendered, in our translation, *with Mesech*, is agreed, by critics, to be understood *so long*.



DAVID now laments his detention in those wilds: and yet his sojourning there served, in effect, but the better to prepare and fit him for his conquests over the *Edomites*; which opened his way to the *Red-sea*, and, in consequence, to that traffic, which, in his own, and his son's reign, so remarkably enriched and aggrandized his kingdom.

HOWEVER, his situation for the present was very disagreeable to him. He loved peace, and order, and discipline; which ill suited the restless and turbulent spirit of the *Arabs*: *My soul* (says he) *hath long dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace. I labour for peace: but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle.*

It is evident from these words that *David* had endeavoured to mend the manners of these savages; to reclaim them from their fierce and savage dispositions; and inspire them with the love of peace, and the arts of peace.

It may be thought a wild conjecture; but it will not injure the reader to consider it: What if *Orpheus* in *Thrace* was no other than *David* in *Paran*?

I BEG only to premise and to submit one easy case to the candid reader's consideration; and that is, whether, if he saw two historical pictures, (the only two of the kind extant in the world) all whose out-lines, parts, proportions, principal figures, actions, and attitudes, were exactly the same, but the colouring and other circumstantials different, and one of these confessedly antient,

and a true original, and the other demonstrably later, but the date and the author uncertain, whether he would not conclude the latter (whatever its owners may pretend) to be in truth no other than a copy, industriously varied from the great authentic, undoubted original.

How far this may be the case between this part of *David's* history and the fable of *Orpheus*, the reader will judge for himself.

IN the first place, then, *Aristotle*, the most exact inquirer of all antiquity, is of opinion, that there never was such a man as *Orpheus* \*; consequently, *Orpheus* is some other man characterized under that name.

*Vossius* is of the same opinion with *Aristotle*, and says, that the name is *Phœnician*; and signifies, in that language, a wise and learned man. Let us then inquire who this real person was, who was thus characterized under the name of *Orpheus*.

THE accounts of all antiquity agree in this, that he was the most eminent for his skill and mastery on the harp, of any man that ever lived. It is allowed, that *David* was that man.

*Photius* tells us, he was a king (of the *Macedonians* and *Odrysians*, near the river *Hebrus* in *Thrace*). *David* is, at least as far as I know, the only king of all antiquity famous for his skill on the harp.

THE common opinion is, that he was a *Thracian*. *Pausanias* says \*, in one place, that the

\* *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. §. 38. edit. *Davis*.

† In *Phocian.* l. 19. c. 30.

antient *Greek* pictures drew him in a *Grecian* dress, and that he had nothing *Thracian* about him; in another \*, that an *Egyptian*, whose name he does not mention, insisted upon his being an *Egyptian*.

PHILOSTRATUS says †, that the *Babylonians* highly honoured him; not on account of his music, but because they found him dressed with a *tiara*. And *Gronovius*, in his *Roma Subterranea*, finds some very antient medals, in which he is represented with a *tiara* upon his head. This plainly shews him an *Asiatic* prince.

Now the word *tiara* is of *Hebrew* original, and signifies a *crown*, such as *David* took from the king of *Ammon's* head, and put upon his own (2 *Sam.* xii. 30.). Whom then can such a figure so properly represent, as king *David*? I own, I know not whom else it can represent; especially if we consider the description *Callistratus* gives us § of the statue of *Orpheus* erected at *Helicon*, near those of the *Muses*. This, he says, represents him of a most beautiful person, with fine flowing hair, and sparkling eyes, a lyre in his hand, and a *tiara* on his head, all kinds of birds, and mountainous wild beasts about him, and all fishes of the sea, all softened, and attentive to his music. The very rocks, says he, seem smitten with his harmony; the rivers running from the fountains, and the waves of the sea lifting themselves up with love of his music; and, lastly, all the plants of the earth hastening to him from their several nurseries.

\* In *Eliacis*, l. 6. c. 20.

† In *Vita Apollonii*, l. 1. c. 25.

§ *Statua Orphei*, VII.



I SHALL not trouble the reader with an application of this description to the several circumstances of *David's* person and character. The relation is sufficiently obvious; and therefore I shall only add, that whoever reads the *Psalms of David*, and sees there the whole creation particularly summoned in, to fill up the chorus of the divine\* praise, will find this statue a fine emblem of him and them.

DAVID was the sweet singer of *Israel*. If we derive *Orpheus* from the *Greek*, it is a composition of two words, which signify a *fine* or *sweet voice* (*ὠραία φωνή*).

THE name of *David's* wife, *Michal*, or *Michol*, in *Hebrew*, is *powerful*; *Eurydice*, in *Greek*, of *extensive right* or *jurisdiction*.

DAVID was the first of all that were properly and professedly poets: *Iamblichus* calls *Orpheus* the *oldest of poets* (in *Vit. Pythag.*): and *Plutarch* (*de Musica*) tells us, that *Terpander*, who settled the laws of the lyric poetry, imitated *Orpheus*, but *Orpheus* nobody.

DAVID was a prophet. So was *Orpheus*.

DAVID endeavoured to reclaim the *Arabs*, worshippers of *Bacchus*.

† ORPHEUS, the *Bacchanal-Thracians*.

DAVID had reclaimed deserts (the tradition of the *Arabs* is, that stones and birds were obe-

\* See *Psal.* cxlviii. O praise the Lord, &c. ye dragons, and all deeps—mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars; beasts, and all cattle—worms and feathered fowl—kings of the earth, &c.

† So *Herod.* and *Strabo* report of them.

dient to him \*); but he could not reclaim the *Arabs*.

ORPHEUS made the rocks, woods, beasts and birds, to follow him, and stopped the course of waters; but could not civilize the *Thracians*.

DAVID, the great teacher of the divine will, endeavoured to convert the *Arabs* living in deserts, and reported by travellers to be very uncleanly in their eating, from rapine and murder, to the arts of peace.

*Sylvestres homines sacer interpresque deorum,  
Cædibus & fædo victu deterruit Orpheus †.*

*Orpheus*, the sacred prophet of the gods,  
From slaughter and from filthy food deterr'd  
The woodmen wild - - - - -

DAVID'S wife was ravished from him, and taken down to *Laisb*, near *Acaron*.

ORPHEUS'S wife was ravished † † from him, and carried down to hell; that is, in the style of the poets, she was carried to the region of *Acheron*.

ORPHEUS incessantly lamented his wife in the woods and caves. Can we doubt whether *David* lamented his? a princess that married him for love, and saved his life, apparently at the hazard of her own.

THE lvi<sup>th</sup> psalm is set to the tune or measure of a song called *Jonath elem rechokim*; that

\* *Herbelotte Biblioth. Orient.* † *Horat. de Art. Poet.*

† † *Pluto* ravished his wife *Proserpine* as she was gathering flowers in a meadow. It was prophesied of *Saul*, that he should take away the sons and daughters of the *Israelites* at pleasure; and the name of his wife *Achinoam* is made up of two *Hebrew* words, which, with a common change of a *vau* for a *jod*, signify *fair* or *pleasant grass*.

is, *A dove in the remote woods*.— Surely, it is no forced conjecture, to suppose, that this was some song of *David's*, now desolated, and lamenting the loss of his wife in the desarts of *Paran*. We could not expect to find any such song among the *Psalms*; they are a collection of another kind; but some memorial of such lamentations we might hope to find; at least, it would not be surprising, if we should.

THE way into *Pluto's* kingdom, *Virgil* tells us, was through a dark cave, surrounded and guarded by the lake *Avernus*\*, and thick black woods. This lake is thus described by *Virgil*:

- - - *Tuta lacu nigro nemorumque tenebris,  
Quam super haud ullæ poterant impune volantes  
Tendere iter pennis: talis sese halitus atris  
Faucibus effundens, supera ad convexa ferebat.  
Unde locum Graii dixerunt nomine Avernum.*

And here th'access a gloomy grove defends,  
And here th'unnavigable lake extends;  
O'er whose unhappy waters, void of light,  
No bird presumes to steer his airy flight;  
Such deadly stenches from the depth arise,  
And steaming sulphur, that infects the skies.  
From hence the *Grecian* bards their legends make,  
And give the name *Avernus* to the lake.

DRYDEN.

\* Going to *Avernus*, a *Grecian* would express by going to *Aornon*, πηγῆς Ἀορνῶν, or εἰς Ἀορνῶν, which is an easy corruption of *Arnon*. This river is the boundary of *Saul's* dominions for a considerable length, and spreads, not far from its fountain, into a lake, surrounded with rocks and woods. It was easy to blend and confound the characters and qualities of these two lakes.

WHO.



WHOEVER knows any thing of the lake *Asphaltites*, will find this to be the exact description of it in all the circumstances. This lake was the boundary of *Saul's* kingdom for a considerable length (about an hundred miles); it was pitchy, black, fetid, averse to life, and part of it on fire for many ages after the invention of this fable. May not this lake then be *Styx*, *Acheron*, *Avernus*, and *Phlegethon*, all in one? And the scorched and withered region round it, (still retaining the marks of *Sodom's* destruction) literally the *Lugenti Campi*, or *Lamentable Region*? Contiguous to which is another region of a contrary character, delightful, abounding with pleasant groves, filled with nightingales, and answering the description of the *Elysian* fields.

*Aristæus*, who carried off *Eurydice*, has his name from ἀριστοί, or rather ἀριστοί, the nobility. *Phalti*, to whom *Michal* was given by *Saul*, we may well presume, was of that order: and I submit it to the learned in the *Hebrew*, whether *Phaltiel* may not signify as much.

ORPHEUS was skilful in magic, found out the way of initiating into the sacred mysteries, expiating crimes, curing diseases, and appeasing the wrath of the gods (*Paus. in Bæot.*). The whole œconomy of the temple service was settled and regulated by DAVID; his prayers stopped the plague, and appeased the divine wrath; and his music overpowered the evil spirit that possessed *Saul*.

ORPHEUS offended the *Thracian* women, by carrying their husbands up and down after him (*ibid.*). DAVID's men attended him in  
all

all his wanderings, and, for the most part, without their wives, until their settlement in *Gath*; which, probably, their wives did not like. Nor is there any doubt that they were all highly offended with him, when they were made captives by the *Amalekites*, in the absence of their husbands, who were then with *David*.

ORPHEUS is allowed to have excelled all other poets in sacred and religious hymns. That excellence will not, I believe, be denied to *David*.

ORPHEUS first taught the rites of *Bacchus*; was an excellent dancer, and made dancing a necessary rite of initiation, and an established ceremonial in the feast of the gods (*Lucian de Saltat.*). DAVID'S dancing at the great feast of removing the ark, and afterwards feasting the people both men and women, with each a piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine, is well known. And as dancing, and drinking wine, were principal parts of the *orgia* of *Bacchus*, this might naturally give rise to the story of *Orpheus's* introducing the rites of *Bacchus* among his country-men.

ORPHEUS softened the infernal king with his music, and he let him have his wife. *David* softened king *Saul*. Now king *Saul*, in *Hebrew*, is מלך שאול; which words are radically the same, when pointed, to signify king *Saul*, and the infernal king. He detained *David's* wife from him; at last gave her to him.

PLUTO

PLUTO gave ORPHEUS his wife on certain conditions\*, and took her back again. SAUL gave DAVID his wife on certain conditions, and took her back.

PLUTO is charactered sad, relentless, unmerciful, inexorable; and is described holding a sceptre, with which he drives the dead to hell: his attendants, *Cerberus* and the *Furies*. Is this any more than a poetic description of a melancholy, furious, outrageous, and implacable prince, as *Saul* was? who had his ministers of vengeance always about him; and delighted to sit with a spear (that is, his sceptre) in his hand, ready to destroy, and to dart it where his rage directed.

THE only difficulty now remaining is, that ORPHEUS was, as is commonly believed, of *Thrace*, and DAVID of *Palestine*; and yet even this will be removed, if we admit a conjecture of the learned *Huetius*. The people of *Palestine*, says he, are called in *Hebrew* כְּרִיִּים. Now these are the same radicals, which, by an easy transposition, become כְּרִיִּים; that is *Thracians*. Not to insist, that the wilds of *Thrace* were, indeed, a strange place from whence to bring the father and founder of the *Grecian* music: which *Sir Isaac Newton* hath, with infinitely better reason and judgment, derived from *Palestine*, and from the age and actions of *David*.

\* *Photius* says so, but names no conditions: nor the old *Greek* poet quoted by *Athenæus*; but that he gave her to him, being softened with his music. So that the condition mentioned by *Virgil*, is, in all probability, an invention of his own.

And



And that *Orpheus* was not a *Thracian*, hath, I hope, been sufficiently proved.

BUT suppose the learned *Huetius* mistaken in his conjecture; it was easy to shift the scene, the better to disguise the truth, and vend the fable. Nor will it make much to our disadvantage, that they shifted it to a country, which, *Pliny* tells us, was the fountain of all the *Grecian* fabulosity\*.

I SHALL not presume to pronounce any thing upon the point; but barely to observe, that it was easy to build such a fable, as that of *ORPHEUS*, upon the foundation of such an history, as this of *David*. And, if that was not done, how, otherwise, every character, in both, should, so surprisingly, and some of them so strictly, correspond, king *Saul*, (the very letters that constitute the words) his character and country, with *Pluto* and his; *Achinoam* with *Proserpine*, *Michal* with *Eurydice*, and *David* with *Orpheus*, is to me, I own, utterly unimaginable.

\* *Pliny* indeed says, that the *Grecians* had their learning from *Thrace*: but the authorities to the contrary vastly outweigh in this dispute; and particularly *Herodotus* considers them as a most barbarous nation. And *Diogenes Laertius*, (in *Proœm.*) and *Andro- tion*, quoted by *Ælian*, (l. 8.) affirm the direct contrary.

## C H A P. XVIII.

*The Adventure of Nabal recounted at large:  
Mr. Bayle's Censure of David's Conduct  
on this Occasion considered.*

**D**AVID, as I observed in the last chapter, could do no good amongst those barbarians the *Arabs*; and, for this reason, it is probable, he took the first opportunity he could, with safety, to leave them.

As it was not the purpose of the sacred historian to give a minute description of *David's* wanderings in his exile, but to shew the remarkable protection of the Divine Providence which attended him in that period of his life; we should not be surpris'd to find several breaks in the relation, studiously omitting minutenesses, and hastening to extraordinary and interesting events, one which is related immediately after the account of *David's* going to *Paran*, and is as follows: *Maon*, in the south of *Judea*, was a city which gave its name to the neighbouring wilderness, which is thought to have been contiguous to that of *Paran*.

In this city dwelt a rich man, but, as the text expresses it, *churlish and evil in his doings*, whose name was *Nabal*. And as the riches of those times consisted in natural wealth, such as flocks and herds, *Nabal*, we are told, had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: these

he fed in *Carmel*, which possibly, was a part of the wilderness of *Maon*, at least was in its neighbourhood. Not that *Carmel*, so famed for the residence of *Elisha*; for that was in the north of *Judea*, and this in the south.

IN this *Carmel*, while *David* was in that neighbourhood, *Nabal* had a sheep-shearing; and as that was antiently, and I believe is still, a season of great rural festivity, *Nabal* made a feast for his hinds: which *David* hearing of, sent ten of his servants with a very kind salutation, and a request, agreeable to the simplicity and hospitality of that age, that he would, out of the plenty provided for the occasion, send him and his men some refreshment.

THE man, it seems, was an unworthy descendant from the great *Caleb*; and, as I now observed, morose and churlish, one that knew no end of the abundance with which GOD had blessed him, beyond satiety and surfeit. He was, what *Caligula* used to call *Syllanus*, a *golden brute*\*. And when *David's* servants had delivered their message, he returned an answer agreeable to his character, rude and fullen, and very natural to that insolence which wealth is too apt to dictate to undisciplined spirits †.

THE message and the answer are both singular in their kind, and not unworthy our regard: the former, as it is a fine picture of the antient and the true politeness; and the latter, a strong

\* χρυσὸν πρόβατον. This is properly a *golden sheep*.

† Δεινὸν γὰρ τοῖς πλεπέσι τὸ ἐμφύλον,  
'Σκαοίσιν εἶναι - - - - -



image of ungoverned brutality. Both of these are to be met with, in 1 Sam. xxv. 5, &c. *And David sent out ten young men; and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus shall ye say to him that liveth, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard, that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee: wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes (for we come in a good day): give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand, unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And, when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all these words, in the name of David, and ceased.*

THREE things, in this message, are well worth our notice. First, the direction, *to him that liveth*; and, secondly, the salutation, *Peace to thee, and peace to thine house, &c.* In the Scripture, *living*, and *being happy*, are synonymous\*. *David's* own benevolent spirit suggested to him, that, being happy ourselves, we should delight to make others share in our happiness. GOD does so; and the man after

\* From them the *Latin* poets learnt this style:

*Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus.*

Let us, my *Lesbia*, live and love.

GOD'S own heart does so too. At the same time *David* well knew, that *Nabal* was bound to relieve him, from GOD'S own exprefs command\*.

IN the next place, the beauty and propriety of that antient eastern salutation, *Peace be to thee*, &c. is very emphatical; inasmuch as the best blessings of life, and all the social affections, attend upon peace.

AND, in the last place, the modesty of this message is very remarkable: for tho' *David* had much real merit towards *Nabal*, yet he puts his request only upon the foot of having no demerit towards him; well knowing, that some martial men are wont to deem this merit enough towards the tame inhabitants of the country, and they to think it so; but at the same time referring him to his own servants for a fuller information.

STUPID *Nabal*, insensible to all these civilities, returns an answer agreeable to the bearishness of his nature (*ver. 10, 11*): *And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse †? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water §, and my flesh, that*

\* Deut. xv. 7. *If there be among you a poor man (that is, one in necessity) of any of your brethren,—thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.*

† He also had learned *Saul's* contemptuous style.

§ Some think, that, being in a desert, where water was scarce, mere water is here meant: but *water*, probably, is here put for any liquor.

*I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?*

WHEN this answer was reported to *David*, his indignation rose to an high degree; but without breaking out into any other words, than a short command to four hundred of his followers to gird on their swords, and attend him (The other two hundred were left with the baggage).

IN the mean time one of *Nabal's* servants reported *David's* message, and their master's answer, to their mistress *Abigail*, *Nabal's* wife; adding withal, that *David* and his men had deserved well of their master, inasmuch as they were a guard to his flocks night and day, so that nothing was lost or destroyed during the whole time of their abode in the wilderness; and that they should have put their master in mind of all this, but that he was such a son of *Belial*, (that is, so unruly and headstrong) they did not dare to speak to him. They ended with a strong assurance, that *David* would not let such an indignity go unrevenge'd; and therefore it behoved her to take some speedy measures to prevent the impending evil.

ABIGAIL was a woman of distinguished merit. She had the advantage of a beautiful person, set off by an excellent understanding, a fine address, and an uncommon prudence: she was, as *Ælian* says of *Aspasia*, καλὴ καὶ σοφὴ, *fair and wise*. *Abigail* had the wisdom and the beauty of *Aspasia*, without her blemishes. We grieve to see such women unhappily



paired with brutal husbands: though, perhaps, such husbands are (to some of them) no more than a necessary allay to that vanity which so many accomplishments are too apt to inspire.

As soon as the servants had done speaking, *she made haste*, (says the text) *and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles* (that is, two skins or borchios) *of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses*; and, dispatching some servants before her, told them she would follow instantly: and did accordingly, but without saying one word of the matter to her husband.

HER servants well knew the way to *David's* haunts: *And it was so*, (says the text) *as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill; and, behold, David and his men came down against her, and she met them.*

Now the text informs us that *David had said*, Surely, in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him, and he hath requited me evil for good. So and more also do God unto the enemies of *David*, if I leave of all that pertain to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall; that is, as interpreters generally expound it, he determined not to leave so much as a dog alive in his family.

ABIGAIL could easily perceive, both by his haste and his looks, that vengeance was determined against her husband, and that all her address

address was little enough to avert it; and therefore, as soon as ever she saw *David*, she threw herself from her ass, and fell upon her face before him, and deprecated his vengeance, in such a strain of humble, pathetic, natural (and, for that reason, apparently very artful) eloquence, as is not, I verily think, to be paralleled in antiquity.

SHE begins, by begging that the blame of this misconduct might light on her; but begs at the same time, that he would please to hear what she has to say in her own excuse (as for *Nabal*, he was below *David's* notice; a man, as his name implied, of very mean understanding \*): and she excuses herself, by assuring him, that she heard not a word of his message, until his servants were sent away. She then insinuates the goodness of GOD to him, in withholding him from revenge, and from blood; and in the very same sentence insinuates a most solemn adjuration † to abstain from both: and, immediately after, beseeches him, that he would suffer his servants to accept her presents, (they were too mean for *his* acceptance) repeating her petition for forgiveness; and adding, that GOD would certainly preserve him from his enemies, whom she wishes to be all as *Nabal*; that GOD,

\* *Nabal* is his name, (says she) and folly is in him.—*Nabal* in *Hebrew*, signifies a fool.

† Here *Le Clerc* observes, that whoever refused any thing that was fit and just, when thus adjured, was as guilty of perjury, as if he had been expressly forsworn; because he was, in that case, deemed to have despised the name of GOD, by which that just request was made.

whose battles he had fought, (finely insinuating, that such only were worthy his prowess) and whose laws he had hitherto kept inviolate, would certainly preserve, and in the end establish him in the throne; and that then it would be matter of no remorse or disquiet to him, that he had abstained from self-vengeance, and the shedding of innocent blood; concluding with an earnest request, that when GOD had established him, he would remember her.

THE beauty, energy, and address of this oration are such, as I shall not take upon me to explain or illustrate in any adequate degree: and therefore I leave it, as proper matter of curiosity, to every reader of taste; to the learned, in the original; and to the less learned, in every translation.

ABIGAIL had no sooner ended, but *David*, throughly changed from his purpose, and struck with horror of the vengeance he had determined to take, breaks out into thanksgivings to GOD, and blessings upon her, that had turned him from his evil purpose? *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood. and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had*



*had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth\* against the wall.*

*SO David received of her hand (saith the text) that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see I have*

\* As I have long been fully satisfied, that the Scriptures are the fountain-head of all true politeness among mankind; and as nothing is a stronger instance of true politeness, than the decency with which the necessities of nature, and the intercourse of the sexes, is expressed; and I find every thing offensive in these as carefully concealed in the *Hebrew* phraseology, as the instincts of nature dictate the actions themselves should, I cannot help suspecting, that where-ever it is otherwise in our translation, that translation is faulty. That the translators are faulty in a very coarse offensive version from the *Greek*, is clear to a demonstration, from that passage in the xith. ch. of St. *John's* Gospel, at the 39th v. which should be thus translated: *Lord, by this time he smelleth; for he hath been dead four days.* How offensively this very decent word *smelleth* is translated in our version, the reader may satisfy himself, by having recourse to it; it being abused by a word which I never wrote, nor ever pronounced, from a child; and if they are thus faulty in language so well known, I am very apprehensive, they may be more so in one so much less studied and understood. Now I apprehend that passage referred to in the text, should be translated thus, *any that watereth against the wall.*

Whenever any action or thing carries any thing offensive in the idea, almost all languages have learned the politeness of expressing that action by two or more different terms; some of which express it without the annexed turpitude or offence, as others with it: the former is the language of the better bred, and the latter of the viler vulgar.

Now I find two words in the *Hebrew* tongue signifying the necessity of nature now under consideration; one of these I find in the mouth of a most accomplished man to a woman of the same character, and the other in the mouth of an insolent enemy to a besieged people, whom he had a mind to affright with all the horrors he could crowd into his threats. Therefore when I find him threatening that people to reduce them to the distress of feeding upon the necessities of nature, 2 *Kings* xviii. 27. I conclude he meant to express those necessities in all their horror and offensive turpitude: and therefore, of the words signifying the same necessity,

sity,

*have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.\**

THE finest spirits are soonest kindled into a flame; and to see them quickly cooled and calmed again upon the first shew of submission, by the first gleam of conviction, and raging wrath changed in one instant into flowing humanity and benignity, is the surest test of generosity, and true magnanimity!

IT must be owned, that this resolution of *David's* is not easily acquitted of rashness and cruelty. However, a good deal may be said to alleviate, if not to remove, the guilt of it. He was now, as *Henry of Navarre* used to say of himself, *a king without a kingdom, a husband without a wife, and a soldier without money!* He could not always subsist himself by the spoils of his enemies: the tyranny of his prince precluded him from subsisting in any of the ordinary ways of other subjects; and his distinguished merits towards his country well intitled him to a support from thence. And besides all this, his particular benefactions to *Nabal* gave him a peculiar claim to his benevolence; for he had not only not injured him in his flocks and herds, which *Mr. Bayle* would very unfairly

sity, I conclude that used by *David* to be the modest and the decent, and that by *Rabshakeb* to be the indecent and offensive. I heartily wish, that our translators had learned, and that some people of high station and quality would learn, or give a little more attention to, this distinction.

\* In the original it is, *I have lifted up thy face*; that is, I have raised thee from a posture of supplication, and granted thy petition.

insinuate



insinuate to be his whole merit towards *Nabal*, but he had, in truth, protected and defended his possessions—*They were a wall unto us* (say his own servants) *both by night and by day* (1 *Sam.* xxv. 16.) They were in a desert, and in the neighbourhood of the *Arabs*, and within the reach even of the *Philistine* incursions: at least, within those of the *Amalekites*, who made a practice of spoiling the *Israelites*, (1 *Sam.* xiv. 48. ), and for that reason also well deserved to be destroyed. And what less could be meant by protecting them both *by night and by day*, in such a situation, than protecting them from rapine, from theft, and from wild beasts? Nor could this be done without much care, and even some hazard of their lives. And had *David*, after all, no right to any part of all that he had thus preserved, or any reward of any kind? Were Mr. *Bayle* now alive, I will presume to say, he would scarce venture to expose his ignorance so far as to answer this question in the negative.

UPON this presumption, I will venture to ask another question, What was *David* to do in this exigency? If he suffered this rude refusal, and gross abuse, to go unchastised, he must of necessity fall into contempt; and to be despised, in his circumstances, was to be undone at once.

To be refused, was injury enough. He had a right to be relieved; and every man, in insuperable necessity, hath so\*, at least, every honest man;

\* And therefore, the case that Mr. *Bayle* puts, of a prince of the blood of *France* out of favour, going about, and raising contributions



man; and, if he cannot obtain this by fair means, he hath a right to use force; and so the law of nature clearly determines. And therefore, with great submission, Mr. *Bayle*, who supposes *David* to have acted in this point against the law of nature, and to have had no right to *Nabal's* goods, is very greatly mistaken, and not sufficiently informed in the law of nature. For *Nabal* therefore not only to refuse, but to add reproach to refusal, reproach at once so contemptuous, and to injurious, inflamed the indignity to the highest degree. Fugitive and slave are imputations of such united contempt and contumely; and when retorted, by ingratitude, upon a guardian and benefactor, are provocations past bearing.

ADD to all this, that *Nabal* was one of those *Ziphites* that had before betrayed *David* to *Saul*: so his race bespeaks him, and so *Josephus* expressly calls him. In a word, the resolution against *Nabal* was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation. The change, and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of an hero, and a saint.

We have an account of a conduct not unlike this, in *Vopiscus's* history of *Aurelian*: When

tributions by military execution, is not fair, nor adequate to this of *David's*; for *Saul* was dethroned by the divine sentence, and *David* actually anointed to the throne. And, to suppose that, in that case, he had not a right to necessary subsistence, (from which nothing but the cruellest tyranny precluded him) is to suppose as gross an absurdity as ever was advanced.

he came to *Tyana*, the city of that poor, vain impostor *Apollonius*, and found the gates shut against him, he declared in a rage, that he would not leave a dog alive in it. His soldiers, hearing this declaration, pressed the siege with more than ordinary vigour: but, however, before it was reduced, it was betrayed by one of the citizens into the emperor's hands; who, from an uncommon strain of policy and generosity, slew the traitor, and spared the city. And when the soldiers, who expected the sackage and spoil of the place, according to the emperor's declaration, urged him to the execution of it; *I did* (says he) *declare I would not leave a dog alive here: I command you to kill them all.*

THE dignity of this saying is best estimated by its influence; for we find it was able to subdue even the rapaciousness of a degenerate soldier-spirit; they accepted it instead of spoil: *The whole army* (says the historian) *received it, as if they had been enriched.*

WHEN *Abigail* returned home, she found her husband in the midst of his revels, and drinking to a great excess (turning the medicine into a distemper, as *Pliny* calls *drunkenness*); and therefore she took no notice to him of her transaction with *David*, until sleep had restored him to his senses. She then told him of his danger, and, without doubt, painted it in the liveliest colours; at least, if we may judge by the effect, which is thus described in the text:

AND

AND it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. The baseness of his own heart made him believe David incapable of forgiving him, and therefore his terror became irremediable.

THIS extremity of terror we commonly express by the term of *thunder-struck*; which is finely and feelingly described by Ovid (*Trist.* l. 1. el. 3.):

*Non aliter stupui, quam qui Jovis ignibus ictus  
Vivit, & est vitæ nescius ipse suæ.*

So was I stunn'd, as one that's thunder-struck!  
Who lives; but lives unconscious of his life.

WE have many accounts of men dying through fear of death: but as nothing that we call accidents, or natural causes, excludes the interposition of Providence in any event; therefore the Scripture phrase is highly to be justified and admired, which imputes *Nabal's* death to a stroke from God. A way of thinking, which both *Homer* and *Virgil* have copied in two remarkable instances.

WHEN *David* heard, that *Nabal* was dead, he again breaks out into blessings and thanksgivings to God, that had diverted him from the intended evil: *Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from*  
the



*the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head.*

How fine a document is this to mankind to remit injuries, to refer themselves and their concerns to the Providence of God, to quell the spirit of revenge in the haughty heart, and to recede from rash and wicked resolutions, tho' backed even by solemn oaths!

WHEN a decent time had intervened, after the death of *Nabal*, *David* sent messengers to *Abigail* with proposals of marriage; which she accepted with singular humility, and undissembled joy; stranger alike to affected delay, and unvirtuous disguise. In all probability, no such forms obtained in those simpler ages: or, if any did, she had too much good sense to be enslaved to them.

AND she arose, (saith the text) and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord (Here, we see, she bowed herself to the earth, even to the servants of *David*, in honour of their master; as the houses of parliament uncover in honour of the king's message). And *Abigail* hastened and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of *David*, and became his wife.

DAVID had, in all probability, at this time, (I grieve to tell it) another wife, *Abinoam*, of *Jesreel*, a city in the south of *Judah*, and neighbourhood

bourhood of *Carmel*, to whom, it is believed, he was married before his affiance with *Abigail*\*.

POLYGAMY was a practice prevalent in those ages, from a corrupt interpretation of *Levit.* xviii. 18. and *David*, probably hoped to strengthen his interest in his own tribe by this double alliance; especially when he apprehended it must be considerably weakened in that of *Benjamin*, by *Michal's* being taken away from him, and bestowed upon *Phaltiel*, the son of *Laiſh*, a *Benjamite* (which *Saul* did, to take away all his pretensions to the crown from that alliance). Doubtless, this injury which *Saul* did him, would have been some, or, to speak more properly, a sufficient justification for *David's* taking another, if he had stopped there, inasmuch as his own wife lived in adultery, and therefore might be divorced; but, when once he married *Abigail*, he went on, and married more; for error knows no end.

\* Because, whenever they are mentioned, *Abinoam* is always named first, 1 *Sam.* xxvii. 3. and xxx. 5. 2 *Sam.* ii. 2. and iii. 2.

## C H A P. XIX.

*David goes into Saul's Camp in the dead of the Night with one Companion. What ensued thereupon.*

**I**T should seem, from the preceding accounts of *David's* sojourning among the *Arabs*, and marrying two wives, since his last reconciliation with *Saul*, that there had now been a considerable intermission of his persecution. For he himself complains of his delay among the *Arabs*; and the multiplying of wives is a business of leisure, at least, if not of idleness: and therefore it is, seemingly, matter of some wonder, to see commentators and chronologers crowd all these transactions, and more, into the compass of one year. But, for my own part, since my late better acquaintance with these authors, I have learned to be less surpris'd at any instance of their inaccuracy or incogitancy. They are men (a very few excepted) who transcribe with great accuracy and tread with great exactness in the tracks of their predecessors: but as for clearing difficulties, throwing light upon obscurities, or placing events in their natural order and distance, from the force of genius and penetration, or intense thinking; he that expects to find much of that amongst them, will find himself much disappointed.

SAUL was a young man when he came to the crown, (1. *Sam.* ix. 2) and his fourth son



was forty years old when he died (2 *Sam.* ii. 10.). He died a king, and his reign was uninterrupted; and yet some commentators gravely suppose him to have reigned only two years. And surely no man that considers this, will be much surpris'd, to find *David's* long dwelling in the tents of *Kedar*, his marrying two wives in succession, his return to *Ziph*, his subsequent reconciliation to *Saul*, and flight to *Gath*, all crowd'd into the compass of one year.

HOWEVER, taking it for granted, that these transactions took up more time than is allowed them, without presuming to determine how much, I shall proceed to consider the three last of them in their order.

THE next news we hear of *David*, after his marriage with *Abigail*, is, his being again at *Ziph*, and being again betrayed by the *Ziphites* \*.

## THE

\* This account Mr. *Bayle* takes to be the same with that of his being at *Ziph* (chap. xxiii.); but without presuming, or (shall I say?) vouchsafing, to give any reason for his opinion. In this he acted wisely; because, I am well satisfied, he could assign no reason for this assertion, that could stand the test of the slightest examination.

When *David* was first at *Ziph*, the *Ziphites* press'd *Saul* to go against him, with assurances, that they would deliver him into his hands; but, before *Saul* could reach him, *David* slipt into the wilderness of *Maon*, and there narrowly escap'd in the manner before related.

At this time the *Ziphites* barely inform *Saul* of *David's* being in their neighbourhood: they neither press him to go against him, nor do they give him any assurance of delivering *David* into his hands. Not the first; because they might apprehend, that *Saul's* resentment might now be somewhat cooled (as, indeed, it seems to be; for he neither gives them the same thanks, nor is he in the same

THE numbers he supported would not allow him to continue long in the same place; and therefore he was often obliged to shift for subsistence. And I doubt not but his long conversation with the *Arabians* taught him how and when to do this to greatest advantage.

WE do not read of his having been among the *Ziphites* since their last treachery to him. And, if he were not, it is probable they now dreaded his return, as fearing the effects of his resentment; and therefore they informed *Saul* of his retreat.

IT is justly and judiciously observed, that the injured often forgive, but the injurer never: the same malignity of mind which makes them do an injury, will not suffer them to forgive it; they have no notion, that others have generosity enough to remit what they are sure they themselves never would in the same circumstances: and therefore the injured are always

same transport upon their information): not the second; because they were unsuccessful in their former engagement: they had learnt by experience, that *David* was not so easily to be surpris'd, or over-reach'd, as they at first imagin'd.

In the first account, *David*, as was before noted, shifted quick from *Ziph* to *Maon*: in the second, *David* continues still in *Ziph*, and in *Ziph* surpris'd *Saul* in the midst of his camp.—In the first, *David*, with difficulty, escapes *Saul*: in the second, *Saul* falls into *David*'s hands.—In the first, *David* flies from *Maon* to *Engedi*: in the second, from *Ziph* to *Gath*; from whence he no more returned during the life of *Saul*. In a word; all the material circumstances of time, place, and accidents, antecedent, subsequent, and concomitant, relating to the first expedition, are intirely different from those of the second. And if all these are not able to countervail the weight of Mr. *Bayle*'s *Ipse dixit*, they that are of his opinion, for no better reasons than his authority, are, with great submission, no very free thinkers.

treated by them as irreconcilable enemies, whom the interest of their own safety obliges them to oppress.

THIS, in all probability, was now the case of the *Ziphites*; and, perhaps, if they had not thrown this temptation in his way, *Saul's* reconciliation had continued longer uninterrupted. His resentment was like embers raked up, (*suppositos cineri doloso*) which the least rousing kindles anew. His chosen band of 3000 picked men was always in a readiness, and out he issues with them once more against *David*; and pitched, (*i. e. his camp*) as the text tells us, *I. Sam, xxvi. 3. in the hill of Machilah, which is before Jeshimon by the way.* *David* had before deceived him, by hiding himself in a defenceless and unsuspected place, by the side of the high-road; and *Saul* resolved he should not play him the same delusion a second time: but he forgot, that *David* was too good a soldier to attempt it; well knowing that *Saul* would now be prepared for such a deceit. *David* therefore contented himself with retiring into the recesses of the wilderness, and sending out spies to observe *Saul's* motions; and when he had learnt from them, that he was actually come out in person, and where he was encamped, he walked up with only two companions, *Abimelech* the *Hittite*, and *Abishai* the son of *Zeruiah*, (*David's* sister) and brother to *Joab*, to an eminence, from whence he might take a distinct view of *Saul's* camp. And when he had well considered and examined

it,



it, and thoroughly satisfied himself of the very spot in which *Saul's* tent stood, which was in the very centre of the camp, he asked his companions, which of them *would go down\* with him to Saul, and to the camp?* *Abisbai* answered, That he would. And accordingly when they judged it late and dark enough for their purpose, they took their way thither.

IF it be asked, Why *David* chose to go with one companion, rather than take both?

I ANSWER, That secrecy was now the great point; and *David* thought himself safer, in this respect, with a single companion. Less noise and accidents would attend on two, than on any greater number. Perhaps too, *Abimelech* was left behind with directions what measures to take with *David's* men, in case of an alarm.

WHEN they reached the camp, they found it in a deep quiet; sleep and silence reigned throughout: so on they passed, until they came to the centre, where *Saul's* tent stood, (or, as the LXX. understand it, his *chariot* †) and

\* This expression plainly shews, that they were then upon an eminence higher than that of *Saul's* camp; for otherwise, as *Saul's* camp was pitched upon an hill, the expression must have been, Who will go up with me?

† The mention of *Saul's* chariot puts me in mind of that part of the fable of *Pluto*, mentioned by *Pausanias*, that he carried off *Proserpine* in a chariot with golden reins; from whence he was called χρυσήνιο, golden-reined. Subjects take their fashions from the prince. *Saul* clothed the *Israelite* ladies with scarlet and gold: it is a fair presumption, that they followed his fashion.

*Grotius* observes, that princes were antiently wont to repose themselves in their chariots during their abode in the camp.

saw him stretched out at his length fast asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster\*, and *Abner* and his other captains lying round him.

*ABISHAI* thought this the happiest opportunity that could offer to rid *David* of his mortal and implacable enemy; and therefore earnestly begged for leave to smite him; assuring him, that he should have no need to repeat his blow: *God* (said he) *hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him a second time.* But *David*, still steady to his principles, and the generosity of his own

\* This is much such a picture as *Silius Italicus* gives us of *Mago* (the brother of *Hannibal*) in his camp:

----- *Nec degener ille*  
*Belligeri ritus taurino membra jacebat*

*Effultus tergo, & mulcebat tristia somno.*

*Haud procul hasta viri terræ defixa propinqua, &c.*

*Sil. Ital. lib. 7. v. 291, & seq.*

----- Nor he, degenerate

From martial rites, stretch'd on an ox's hide,

Forgot his cares in sleep; and near him stood,

Fix'd in the ground, his spear, &c.

Though I think the weary and uncentry'd *Thracians* in *Homer* give us rather a stronger image of *Saul* and his camp:

ἽΟΙ δ' ἐΐσον καυδῶ ἀδ' ἰηκότες, ἐνσεα δέσπον

Καλὰ παρ' αὐλοῖσι χθονὶ κέκλιτο εὐ κατὰ νόσον, &c.

Arriving where the *Thracian* squadrons lay,

And eas'd in sleep the labours of the day,

Rang'd in three lines they view the prostrate band:

The horses yok'd beside each warrior stand;

Their arms in order on the ground reclin'd;

Through the brown shade the fulgid weapons shin'd;

Amidst lay *Rhesus*, stretch'd in sleep profound,

And the white steeds behind his chariot bound.

*Pope's Homer, Iliad 10.*

heart,

heart, absolutely forbid him: *Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* (1 Sam. xxvi. 9.) adding moreover, that his life was in the hand of God, who would take him off in his own time, and in the manner he thought best: but, as for himself, *The Lord forbid* (says he) *that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed!* Upon this, he orders *Abishai* to take away the spear and the cruse of water\*, which was at *Saul's* bolster, and come away instantly with them. He did so; and they returned, as they came, in still silence, through the sleeping ranks, without being seen or heard of any mortal: *They gat them away,* (says the text) *and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord was upon them.*

WHETHER any thing supernatural be meant by this expression of *a deep sleep from the Lord*, (as the best commentators think there is) or the sacred penman used it only in conformity to the style of the *Hebrews*, who are wont to add the name of GOD to any thing that is extraordinary, I shall not take upon me to determine.

WHEN *David* and his companion had gained a considerable distance from the camp, and

\* Some imagine this to be a *clepsydra*, or one of those water watch-measures used by the antients in their camps: others, that it was only a vessel of water kept for washing, in case of legal pollutions: and others, that it was laid there for drink, in case of thirst, which the heat of the season might well create a demand for; for it was about the time of sheep-shearing.



ascended an eminence opposite to it, (probably the same from whence they had before observed it) *David* called out, as loud as he could, to *Abner*, that the king and the whole camp might hear him, upbraiding him with a failure in his duty, and neglect in guarding the king as he ought\*, who but now had a narrow escape, inasmuch as there had been one in his camp with a full purpose to destroy him; a neglect for which those who had the care of his sacred person well deserved to die:—*Art not thou* (says he to *Abner*) *a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? For there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord, &c. As the Lord liveth ye are worthy to die †, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.*

MILITARY men, who are the best judges, will, I believe, agree, that this speech is in the true spirit of a good soldier, a brave man, and a faithful subject. The cruse and the spear were at once sufficient proofs of the king's danger and deliverance: but *David* was above mentioning the author of either; he would not betray his friend, and he scorned to boast himself.

\* *Saul* had now the same excuse that *Philip* urged for himself for sleeping in his camp: *I slept*, said he, *because I knew Antipater waked.*

† *Epaminondas*, finding a soldier asleep upon his guard, slew him; and defended himself by barely saying, *He left him as he had found him.*

SAUL knew *David's* voice; and it is obvious to think, that he could not but know at the same instant who was his deliverer. Who could be author of this second unheard-of generosity, but the author of the first? This generosity, the piety and magnanimity that govern'd it, and the base, hellish returns that were made to it, croud-ed into his mind at once, and overwhelmed him with shame and sorrow.

IN this condition he cried out, *Is this thy voice, my son David! And David answered, It is my voice, my lord, O king!* He then added, (the reader must take it from the original; for I can find no other words to express it by) *Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done? or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant? If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; i. e. if GOD hath excited you against me, on the score of any guilt for which I deserve to die; behold, here I am, ready to be sacrificed in atonement for it: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods\*. Now, therefore, let not my*

\* Driving a man among idolaters, was, in effect, forcing him to become an idolater; and a man's forcing another to be so, was as criminal, as if he were himself an idolater. It is very remarkable, that *David* here laments no present loss, or exclusion from just right, other than that of being shut out from the divine ordinances, and forced among the worshippers of idols.

*blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.*

THIS reasoning, this duty, this submission, not only softened, but even humbled, the haughty and obdurate heart of *Saul*; humbled it, if not into a thorough penitent confession, yet, at least, into an open acknowledgment of guilt and folly: *I have sinned* (says he): *return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.*

UPON which *David* desired, he would please to order one of his servants to come to him, and take back the king's spear; and then added this solemn prayer and appeal to GOD; *The Lord render to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day; but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes; so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.*

AFTER which *Saul* concluded with this kind and prophetic farewell: *Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.*

*So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.*



## C H A P. XX.

*Mr. Bayle's Objections to this Part of the Sacred History considered.*

THE reader, who hath been conversant in some late fashionable writings, will not, I believe, be surpris'd to find this part of the Sacred History variously objected to; nor will he, I hope, be displeas'd to see those objections confuted, and cast down in their full strength.

IN the first place, it is objected, That *David* was at too great a distance for this conversation, which is said to have followed after the taking away of *Saul's* spear; for the text expressly says, that when he began it, he stood upon the top of an hill, *afar off*.

I ANSWER, 1<sup>st</sup>, That this expression, *afar off*, may admit of two very plain, and yet very different senses. *Saul* now stood on the top of one hill, and *David* on the top of another contiguous to it: the distance, then, from *Saul* to *David*, reckoning the descent of the one hill, and the ascent of the other, might really be considerable, especially in a country where the hills are high, steep, and precipitous, and both the descent and ascent winding and difficult, which is the case of *Judea*; and yet the real distance in a right line between those summits very inconsiderable. And this I take to have been the case. *David* therefore  
might

might at the same time be near enough to *Saul* to hear, and to be heard by him; and yet, with regard to the distance and danger of a pursuit from him, really afar off.

I ANSWER, *2dly*, That this conversation, as appears from the tenor of the relation, was held in the calm and silence of the morning; at which time it is almost incredible to say at what distance the human voice may be heard with clearness and distinction, especially in a clear, elastic air, such as that of *Judea*: and it is beyond all doubt, that men have often heard even the crowing of a cock at a much greater distance than is necessary to be supposed in this conference. And yet, many of these sounds united are not equal to the force of one human voice exerted in all its articulate strength.

THE intelligent reader will, I am sure, gladly save me the trouble of a fuller confutation.

THE next objection is of more weight, as it comes from a man of allowed learning and parts; I mean Mr. *Bayle*. But, perhaps, it may lose some of its weight, when the reader shall please to consider, that it comes from a great broacher of paradoxes, an industrious dissenter from men of learning, and a known patron of all the errors that ever obtained in the world from its foundation; a defender even of contrary and contradictory errors. However, let his reasons, not his authority, be weighed in this dispute.

HIS main objection is, That these accounts of *Saul's* danger, and *David's* generosity, in the cave, and in the camp, are in reality but

two different relations of one and the same transaction. And his reasons for believing so are as follow :

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE the Scriptures make no reflections, in the second relation, upon this repeated ingratitude of *Saul*, in persecuting *David*, after he had before given him his life. And,

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE the speeches on the second occasion are pretty near the same with those on the first.

To the first of these objections, I answer ; Neither do the Scriptures make any reflections upon *Saul's* ingratitude, in first persecuting *David*, after he had saved both him and his country ; neither do they make any reflections upon his perfidy and ingratitude in giving *Michal* to another, after she was solemnly promised to *David*. Does it follow from hence, that there was no such thing as such a promise, and such a persecution ? And yet it is full as reasonable to expect reflections in either of these cases, as in the other.

THEY make no reflections upon *Saul's* perjury, in attempting so often upon *David's* life, after he had solemnly sworn to *Jonathan*, that he should not be slain. Are we to believe therefore, that no such attempts were ever made ? And if he attempted upon him after the first reconciliation, ratified by an oath, why not after the second, and why not after the third, which were not so ratified ? And yet the sacred writers no-where reflect, that one was the se-

cond



cond reconciliation, and the other the third. When *Saul* darted his spear a second time at *David*, the sacred writer no-where tells us, to aggravate his ingratitude, that this was the second time he attempted upon the life of his best benefactor (the course of the relation sufficiently shewed it to be the second time:) nor do they make any such reflection, even when he attempted him a third time. Shall we then believe the accounts of this second and third attempt to be mere forgeries? What wild work would such objections, were they of any weight, make with all the histories of the world, if a deficiency of reflections must infer a deficiency of truth! And therefore I shall dismiss this important objection with one plain, obvious observation; That the sacred historians delight not in such reflections as every reader can make to himself, and naturally arise from the matter before him. They despise such minutenesses; and it is one of their distinguishing characters, that they do. They reserve themselves (as becomes their dignity) for great occasions. And to infer any thing to their disadvantage on this account, is, in truth, to infer strongly to the disadvantage of human conceit and sufficiency.

IT is urged, in the next place, (at least, it is insinuated) That *David's* speech, and *Saul's* answer, are much the same upon both occasions; and therefore the occasions are in reality but one and the same.

ANSWER, That the danger and the generosity being the same on both occasions, the sentiments

timents arising in the heart must be, in a great part, the same on both. And yet, whoever reads them, will find variety enough to characterize and distinguish them by.

IN the first, *David* calls only to the king, because he had only to do with him: in the second, he calls first to the people; and then to *Abner*, and reproaches him with neglect in guarding his prince: nor does he address himself to the king, till the king first calls to him. In the first, *Saul*, struck with *David's* generosity, lift up his voice and wept, but without any confession either of guilt or folly: in the second, he confesses both, but without weeping.—In the first, the impression of *David's* generosity, a thing new and unheard-of, had its natural effect; there was no striking novelty or surprize in the second; *Saul* was prepared for it. But, at the same time that nature had less to do on this occasion, reason had more: his whole army were now a second time witnesses of *David's* generosity: there was a necessity of saying something to satisfy them; and what less could satisfy them, than a general confession of folly and guilt? and that he makes.

AGAIN: In the first, *Saul*, convinced that *David* would one day come to the crown, intercedes for his posterity; and exacts an oath from *David*, that he would not cut them off. This was the most important and interesting part of the whole conference. If these are but different relations of the same conference, it is strange how the most material and concerning

part



part of the whole should be left out in the last account. But the truth is, this point being fixed by *Saul* in the first conference, there was no need of repeating it in the second.

BUT suppose our accounts of both conferences were in substance the same; would it follow, that the occasions were not different? *Livy* tells us, that when *Manlius* was prosecuted by the tribunes, for affecting to make himself greater than was consistent with the freedom of the commonwealth, he defended himself by applying to the passions of the people; pointing to the capitol, and painting the deliverance he had wrought for them there; and that he did this several times, and the appeal always had its effect. Suppose those speeches had been preserved, and found in substance the same; would any reader of common sense infer, that in reality he had never made but one speech; and that those relations left, of his having spoken them at different times, were nothing but forgery and delusion?

BUT should not *Saul* have owned, that this was the second instance of *David's* generosity to him? that it was the second time that he owed him his life? And if he had done so, Mr. *Bayle* had been satisfied;—that is, if *Saul* had had that ingenuity which a generous spirit should have, Mr. *Bayle* would have believed the truth of the sacred history. Perhaps *he* would: but, possibly, others would rather disbelieve it on that account. Are generosity and ingenuity any part of *Saul's* character? And did any history



story ever lose credit by representing persons in character, or gain any by drawing them out of character? Does not *Saul* do as much as could be expected from a man of his complexion? black, saturnine, ungrateful, envious, proud! *I have sinned* (says he): *return, my son David; for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day.*—*Behold, I have played the fool;—I have erred exceedingly.* Had *Saul* been a man of an ingenuous spirit, his confession had, doubtless, been more explicit and aggravated; whereas it is now the direct contrary; the guilt gradually alleviated, and diminished almost to nothing: first, it is *sin*;—then, it is *folly*;—and, lastly, it is *error*.—But, however, error as it was, it was error in excess; and that, surely, must at least imply degrees and repetition. Were the sin, the folly, and the error, all but one act? Besides all this, though *Saul* had not ingenuity enough to make an explicit confession of *David's* repeated generosity to him, yet it is fully implied, where he tells him, that he shall both do great things, *and still prevail*; *i. e.* as he had prevailed over him before, so he should always.

BUT, it seems, *David* himself does not so much as hint, that this was the second time that he had given *Saul* his life. I own he does not: and I own, I believe Mr. *Bayle* thought *he* would, had he been in *David's* place. And I shall take leave to answer him, as a great poet of the last age did to a very lively objector on

another occasion\*: *I believe, Sir, you would: but then, Sir, you will please to remember, that you are no hero.* The man that could have the greatness of soul to save his enemy twice, was not capable of the littleness of upbraiding him with it. *David's* two points seem to be these; to take no merit to himself from his generosity, and to impute no demerit to *Saul* from his baseness. As to the first, the reader will plainly perceive, that, when he mentions the king's danger, he carefully avoids the least hint of his having any merit in saving his life.—And as to the second, he is industrious to remove all suspicion of his charging *Saul* with any guilt upon his own score, and to place the persecution to the score of his own demerit, which moved GOD to excite *Saul* against him; or, at worst, to the score of those evil counsellors, whose advice forced him away from the inheritance of GOD. He avoids, with great delicacy and address, so much as the mention, or least hint, of his own merit towards him, till *Saul's* shameful diminution of his guilt extorted a very slight and modest remembrance of it: and even then he says not, that he saved his life; but barely, that he abstained from taking it away; and that it was much set by in his eyes. In a word, nothing can be conceived more tru-

\* A young gentleman objected to Mr. *Dryden*, that his *Spartan Hero* was too cold and insensible to the addresses of the *Egyptian* queen; adding that he was sure he should not be so, were he in *Cleomenes's* place. *I believe so too, says Mr. Dryden: but pray Sir, please to remember, that you are no hero.*

ly generous and heroic, than *David's* whole conduct upon his head.

IN the last place, Mr. *Bayle* tells us, That if he saw two narratives of this nature either in *Ælian*, or *Valerius Maximus*, he should make no difficulty to believe, that it was one and the same fact; which, being related different ways, served for the subject of different articles, or chapters.

THAT is; If Mr. *Bayle* had found two narratives of this kind in scrap-collectors, in the compilers of patch-work, unconnected histories, that had no relation to one another, he would make no difficulty to conclude, they related to one fact, &c. And therefore he will conclude the same, when he finds them set down in their order of time and place; and with all possible marks and characters of distinction, in one of the most orderly, regular, well deduced histories, that ever was penned.

IF the admirers of Mr. *Bayle* can find any complacence either in the clearness of this reasoning, or in the candour and ingenuity that conduct it; I will venture to say, their enemies have nothing worse to wish them.

I WILL not presume to say, that there is such a minute detail and connexion of events in the books of *Samuel*, as in those of *Livy* or *Thucydides* (GOD forbid there should!): but are they, for that reason, as unconnected as those of *Ælian*, or *Valerius Maximus*?

IF this be candour, what is chicanery?



LET us now consider the facts in their historical order of time and place.

THE adventure of the cave was soon after *Saul's* return from repelling the *Philistine* invasion, which delivered *David* out of his hands (I *Sam.* xxiv.): it was in the day, in a cave, at the foot of the mountains of *Engedi*. *Saul* was alone in the cave, and *David* had all his men about him: and the proof of his having had *Saul* in his power, was, the skirt of his robe: it was before *David* went to *Paran*, and before he married *Abigail*.

THE adventure of the camp was, by the lowest computation, one year later: it was in the wilderness of *Ziph*, thirty miles distant from *Engedi*, in a camp, on an hill, by night; *David* attended but with one companion, and *Saul* in the centre of his whole army; and *David's* proof of having him in his power, his spear and cruse of water taken from his bolster. It was after *David's* marriage with *Abigail*, and just before his final departure to *Gath*; from whence he returned no more, until after *Saul's* death. And the conference shews, that he was then determined to leave the land: *They have driven me out* (saith he) *this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord*. He was now reduced to his last resource; and that was, absolutely to quit his country, and go amongst infidels. If *Mr. Bayle* had attended to this very distressful and very remarkable circumstance, he would have found this second adven-

adventure sufficiently distinguished by it from the first.

I CANNOT quit this head without observing once more upon the singular politeness and refinement of this expostulation; in which *David* carefully avoids all appearance of reproach or censure upon his prince, and charges the whole odium of his persecution upon the influence of his evil advisers.

I WILL only add, that the battles of *Iffus* and *Arbela*, or of *Cressi* and *Agencourt*, have not more or clearer marks of distinction, than these two adventures. And if, after all, they are one and the same; what criterion is there, or can there be, of any one historical truth from the foundation of the world?

CALUMNIATE *boldly*, (says the proverb) *and something will stick.* Modern infidels, not contented with adopting this maxim, have added another to it: *Contradict boldly, and somebody will believe it.*

## C H A P. XXI.

David *flies to Achish King of Gath; from whence he removes to Ziklag. Mr. Bayle's Censure of his Conduct there.*

AND now *David*, weary of wandering, weary of struggling with *Saul's* implacable spirit, weary of the unequal conflict between too dangerous generosity, and too relentless malice; weary of subsisting by the spoils of his enemies, or bounty of his friends; and, probably, since the affair of *Nabal*, in terror of too much resenting their neglects; resolves at last to quit his country, and throw himself, once more, under the protection of its enemies.

THIS, I think, hath always been the resource of great subjects in distress. This drove *Themistocles* to *Persia*, and *Alcibiades* to *Sparta*. And though I will not take upon me to justify a criminal subject in this conduct; yet an innocent man, such as *David*, I think I well may; especially when he hath tried all means of reconciliation and justification, and all other methods of subsistence, and finds no security but in this. It would otherwise follow, that every good man was tamely to give up his life to every caprice of a merciless tyrant: a principle which, I believe, no wise and good man will venture to advance.



HOWEVER, this resolution of *David's* is, I think, universally censured by the commentators, on account of his neglecting to consult GOD, either by his priest, or by his prophet, before he fixed upon it. GOD had commanded him before to go into the land of *Judah* (1 *Sam.* xxii. 5). And, surely, he should not have left that, to go into an heathen country, without a like divine command, or, at least, permission. And therefore most writers ascribe this resolution to want of grace, and a proper confidence in the protection of that GOD, who had so often, and so signally, delivered him in the greatest exigencies. And I own, I cannot help concurring with them. And, indeed, it must be allowed to be the resolution of a mere man, governed by motives merely human: *He said in his heart, I shall now perish one Day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.* This is a natural painting of what passes in the anxious heart, oppressed with difficulties, casting about and considering every way to escape, and at last resolving upon what appears the properest.

THE truth is, he was now in a distressful *dilemma*; either to stay at home in perpetual dread and hazard of his life, or take refuge among idolaters, where they could not bear

the free exercise of his religion, nor he the abominations of theirs.

BESIDES all this, his only prospect of human protection was from the enemies of his country. To owe his safety to the enemies of his country! perhaps be forced to join them against his country!—to be confederate with heathens against *Israel!* how grievous must this be to his godly and patriot spirit! This, surely, was a difficulty that called for the divine aid.

JOSEPHUS tells us, what is very natural to believe, that he advised with his friends upon the matter. And, doubtless, it was not until he had their consent, that *he arose* (as the text tells us he did) *and passed over, with the six hundred men that were with him, unto Achish the son of Maach king of Gath.*

JOSEPHUS tells us, that he advised with his friends on this occasion: but no writer informs us, that he advised with GOD. And I am afraid, this is too often the case of the best men, (I beg the unserious reader's pardon for the reflection) to advise with their friends, and with their own hearts, and leave GOD out of their consultations, by neglecting to implore his aid and direction.

As to *David*, one would imagine, that the danger he ran before in the same place, from the same fundamental error, should have taught him better; but, in all probability, he contented himself with stipulating for protection, maintenance,

tenance, &c. at this time, which he had before neglected.

MOST writers agree, that this *Achish*, to whom *David* now fled, was not the *Achish* by whom he was so un hospitably received, and from whom he so narrowly escaped, when he was before at *Gath*. And, indeed, I think his being here called *Achish* the son of *Maach*, sufficiently implies him to have been another person; for those words can, in the nature of the thing, have no use, but to distinguish this *Achish* from another of the same name. And, indeed, this *Achish* seems as well distinguished from the other by the rest of his character, as by that of the son of *Maach*.

BUT this, by the way, is a fair proof, that this book was written at the time that it is said to have been written; inasmuch as this distinction was information enough to the people of that age, but could neither be given or received as such either by any writer or reader of any subsequent age\*.

THE kindness with which *Achish* received *David*, is best estimated by the effects: he lodged him and his men, with their wives and

\* And therefore, though this character no way informs me who this *Achish* was, whether a brother, a son, or even of the same family with the *Achish* before-mentioned; yet I may fairly conclude, that the note was added to distinguish him from some other. I am satisfied it was a sufficient mark of distinction of this *Achish* from all others, when it was set down: but to us, at this distance, it can be no mark of distinction, but of this *Achish* from one other; that other being the only *Achish* we hitherto hear of, except this:—nor can I believe it was inserted in vain, even with regard to us.



households, in the royal city at *Gath*; until *David*, thinking himself, and his followers, too burdensome to his benefactor, where the royal residence greatly increased the expence of his support; or, perhaps, finding himself less at liberty there to exercise the forms and duties of his religion; and, it may be, often vexed, as *Lot* was in *Sodom*, with the conversation of the ungodly; he desired to be removed to some place of more retirement; which was accordingly granted, and *Ziklag*, on the frontiers of *Judah*, appointed for his reception, and put wholly into his power. Which, surely, was not an ill judged trust: there was no doubt of *David's* defending it, the best he could, against his mortal enemy.

WHEN *Saul* heard, that *David* was fled to *Gath*, he despaired of getting him into his power, as *David* foresaw he would, and so gave over a further search of him.

TO *David* at *Ziklag* many of his friends resorted and among them several considerable men of *Saul's* own tribe and kindred; twenty-two captains of great distinction are numbered by name, whom the Scriptures describe as very valiant and expert warriors: *They were armed with bows*, (saith the text) *and could use both the right-hand and the left in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow*. They saw *David* now in safety, and they thought they might be so too, in declaring for him. It was now no secret, that *Samuel* had long since anointed him to the throne; or, that *Jonathan*

*than* had long since resigned his pretensions to him. *Saul* was disturbed with evil passions, in the decline, and not to be depended upon. *David* was the great hope and stay of the kingdom, and it was natural to turn their eyes upon him. To declare early for him, was the sure way to engage his favour; and the only one that could obliterate the remembrance of their enmity, which had made him an exile, and an out-law.

IN this city of *Ziklag* *David* resided a full year and four months; and as it was a frontier of little strength, and, of consequence much exposed to incursions and ravages, it is not probable that *David* could derive any great advantages towards his support from the product of the place, whose name some critics have derived from its necessities\*: and therefore, since he would not be burdensome to the king, (and, surely, it were very ill judged to be so) he had no way to subsist but by depredations; and his patriot spirit soon prompted him to subsist rather at the expence of his enemies, than his friends; and, at the same time, to consider the enemies of his country, as his own.

THERE were yet some remains of the *Amorites*, and some other antient inhabitants of the country: whom GOD, for their inveterate and incorrigible wickedness, had commanded to be extirpated: and, in destroying these, he might at once obey GOD, rid the

\* Scicileg, *Angustia sextarii*, saith *Pagnin*.

world of a pest, subsist himself, serve his country, and not injure his benefactor.

THESE considerations quickly determined him : and therefore, as long as he continued in that country, he employed himself in continual ravages upon those miscreants ; and took his measures so well, that whatever quarter he invaded, he utterly destroyed (as *Livy* says of *Martius*): *Ne nuntios quidem cladis reliquit* : He left nobody behind him to complain of the calamity.

MR. BAYLE censures this conduct ; and says, it was unjustifiable in *David*, being a private man, to act thus, without a warrant from *Achish*, or from GOD : he had no warrant from *Achish* ; for he acted contrary to his intentions : nor from any prophet ; nor from inspiration ; because the Scriptures are silent upon this head.

THE reader will please to observe, that all Mr. *Bayle's* reasonings against *David* are grounded upon one fundamental error ; and that is, that he acted, in all his exile, merely as a private man. He forgets, that he was elected and anointed to the kingdom ; and that the same Spirit of GOD, which once inspired *Saul* with all regal virtues, was now gone over to *David*, and rested with him. And it were very strange, if *David*, as a king-elect of *Israel*, could have any guilt in doing that, which *Saul*, as a king in possession, was deposed for not doing.

BUT the Scriptures are silent upon the point ; and therefore he was guilty —

THIS,



THIS, sure, is easily retorted: The Scriptures are silent as to any guilt of his upon this head; and therefore he was not guilty.

I MIGHT add, That the Scriptures acquit him of all deliberate, known, executed guilt, except in the matter of *Uriah*.

AND, as to a commission from *Achish*, Mr. *Bayle* forgets, that *David* waited upon *Achish* after his return from his incursions, to give him an account of them, and present him with the spoil. Does not this plainly imply his permission and authority to make incursions? The spoil he brought to *Gath*; but the people he did not; because, if he had, it would soon have been known, that they were not *Jews* (1 *Sam.* xxvii. 11.): *And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, &c.* a text which hath been strangely misunderstood, by the interposition of the word *tidings* \*, which intirely perverts the sense of it. For, if he had spared them, it was not easy for them to carry any intelligence of what was done to *Gath*; since the whole tribe of *Judah* lay between the *Philistines* and those regions which he wasted.

THE spoil of oxen, asses, and camels, *David* (as I now observed) constantly brought to *Achish*; and, it is to be presumed, submitted them to his disposal, and therefore, supposing the people so destroyed in no alliance with

\* In the *English* translation it is, *to bring tidings to Gath*: whereas in the original it is, *he saved neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath.*

*Achish*, *David* was thus far rather beneficent, than injurious to his protector. And it is certain, that there is no sort of reason to believe them in alliance with him, but quite the contrary.

BUT it is urged and aggravated, that *David* deceived his benefactor, and made him believe, that the persons so ravaged and destroyed were *Israelites*.

I OWN he did: but let the reasons why he did so be calmly and candidly considered.

A CHISH wanted to be assured of *David's* inviolable attachment to him; and nothing could give him so effectual an assurance of that, as the enmity of his own countrymen.

Now *David*, who knew his own integrity, and knew himself to be faithful to his benefactor, knew that this proof of it was not necessary, nor would any way advance the king's interest; and therefore thought he might make use of an innocent deception, to inspire *Achish* with all the assurance and confidence in him that he desired, and *David* deserved.

I WILL not stand up in a strict defence of this conduct. It was indeed a deception: but, if it injured nobody, (as I apprehend it did not) I must own I am utterly at a loss what degree of guilt to charge upon it.

THIS must be allowed, that all habits of deception have a natural tendency to bias the mind, and warp it from truth; and therefore ought carefully to be avoided, even where the deception is innocent.

AND there is this further presumption against them, that we often find them attended with evil consequences as in the present case; for we find, that this deception inspired *Achish* with such a confidence of *David's* inviolable attachment to him, as determined him to make him captain of his life-guard.

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## C H A P. XXII.

*The Philistines engage in a new War against Saul. David invited to it. Saul's Adventure with the Pythoness at Endor.*

THE *Philistines*, recruited, about this time, as *Sir Isaac Newton* judges, by vast numbers of men driven out of *Egypt* by *Amosis*, resolve upon a new war with *Israel*. Nor were *Samuel's* death, and *David's* disgrace, (as we may well judge) inconsiderable motives to it.

*ACHISH* knew *David's* merit, and had a thorough confidence in his fidelity; and therefore resolved to take him with him to the war. Accordingly he moved the matter to *David*; and *David*, as commentators think, made him a doubtful answer. The most probable opinion is, that he would not resolve upon so extraordinary a step without consulting *God*, either by his priest, or his prophet. And therefore,



fore, when *Achish* told him, He must go with him to battle; he only answered, *Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do.* Upon which *Achish* replied, *Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever;* that is, in the present military style, he promised to make him captain of his life-guard: and we find, by the sequel, that he did accordingly.

SINCE then we find *David* proceed so far, as to attend *Achish* to *Aphek*, the place appointed for the assembling of the *Philistine* forces; I think there is no reason to doubt, that he went thither with honest intentions towards his protector; and that he did this by the divine permission.

Now, forasmuch as the event of this war turned upon a remarkable piece of misconduct in *Saul*, as a captain; and a grievous and deliberate violation of his known duty to GOD, as his Creator, and his King; the sacred historian here interrupts the course of his relation, to acquaint us with that event; and, in order to it, acquaints us with the situation of both armies. At that time *Saul* encamped upon mount *Gilboa*; and the *Philistines*, in full prospect under him, upon the plains of *Sunem*.

WHEN *Saul* saw their numbers, their orders, and their appointments, he judged himself greatly overpowered, and fell into great terror upon the prospect. What should he do! *Samuel* was dead, and *Abiathar* with *David*. He had, for some years past, shewn no regard, or, to speak more justly, shewn all imaginable disregard,

disregard to religion. His pride had lifted him up above his duty; he had said in his heart, *There is no God*: but now his fears had got the better of his infidelity. He then, too late, had recourse to GOD for aid. He had massacred the priests of GOD at *Nob*, all but one; and that one was gone away to *David* with the *ephod*. He applied himself to some other priest. And since he consulted GOD by *Urim*, it is evident, that he had also gotten another *ephod* made; not considering the peculiar sanctity of the first, or that GOD would confine his manifestations of himself to that which was of his own appointment. At least, *Saul* had no reason to hope, that GOD should exhibit himself in any extraordinary manner in his favour. *Samuel* was dead, and *Gad* was with *David*; and we hear of no other on whom the Spirit of GOD rested in those days. However he applied himself to some of the prophetic colleges, probably to some of the most eminent of those sons of the prophets he had seen at *Ramah*; but to no purpose: GOD refused to answer him, either by *Urim*, by prophets, or by dreams.

WHAT should he do! The heart of man is fond of prying into futurity, and more especially upon the edge of great events. In great dangers men are desirous even to know the worst: it is some consolation, to be prepared for it. He had long since renounced every thing that was serious in religion. However, he had been threatened as from GOD; and, in all probability, the time was now come, when the sen-

tence, so long since pronounced upon him, was to be executed ; could he but see *Samuel*, he should know all ! It was said, there were men who had power over spirits. Who knows how far that power might extend ! GOD had forsaken him ; he could be no worse on that side ; he might be better on some other ; he resolved to try.

INFIDELITY is nearly allied to superstition. To disbelieve upon fair evidence, and to believe without any, arraigns the mind of equal infirmity. The most infidel man I ever conversed with, was, by the accounts of those who best knew him, the most superstitious.

SAUL had prayed to GOD to no purpose ; he now resolved to apply himself to *Samuel* : and I think it evident from the text, that he actually prayed to him ; but had yet no answer. What will not fear and folly force us to ? He, who, but a few hours before, was too haughty to profess himself the servant of the living GOD, is now the slave of his own fears and follies.

SAUL had, in the days of his devotion, partly cut off, and partly frightened away, those wizards and forcerers ; those execrable wretches, the pests of society, and enemies of true religion, whom GOD commanded to be extirpated\*.

How-

\* Those who think such wretches can do no mischief, and therefore ought not to be punished, are, with great submission, much mistaken. For, supposing their charms utterly ineffectual to their intended or pretended purposes ; yet is there no evil in using



However, some of them might have remained, or returned: he inquired; and was informed (princes never want ministers of mischief) of a *Pythonefs*, that dwelt not far off, at *Endor*. His anxiety would let him think of nothing else; he could neither eat nor drink until it was done. To *Endor* he hies that very night, stript of his regal apparel, and disguised as well as he could, and attended only by two companions, When he arrived, he prayed the woman to divine to him by her familiar spirit, and to bring him up

using charms and incantations to wicked ends? invoking evil spirits, reversing their prayers, renouncing their God, and committing themselves, as far as in them lies, to the dominion of hell! If they seriously intend what they profess, are such wretches fit to live? And if they mean only to delude and seduce others into a confidence and trust in those evil arts, can there be greater enemies to society? What can more mischief mankind, than taking off their minds from virtue, from honest industry, and from trust in the divine goodness, for success in our honest endeavours?

I am far from wishing to see every poor wrong-headed, splenetic, vapourish creature, that fancies she can fly, or feeds upon imaginary feasts, tortured, and tried for witches: they are objects of pity; and I should wish to see them put under the care of a good physician, and supplied with proper medicines, and real food. But if there be any who either labour to become witches by evil arts, or labour to delude others to trust and confidence in them, I think no punishment can be too heavy for such miscreants.

I have often wondered and lamented, that christian lawgivers were not more attentive to the laws of God, and more governed by them in their decisions. This I am sure of, they can never err after that pattern; and whenever they swerve or depart from it, they will depart so far from fit, and right, and wise, and just. And therefore, although I can with a safe conscience declare to the whole world, that I have as little faith in witches as the learned author of the *Discourse on Witchcraft*, occasioned by a bill then depending in parliament, for the repeal of some statutes about *Witchcraft* (*London*, printed in 1736); yet I differ intirely from him, both in relation to his opinion of this history, and in relation to the wisdom of an unlimited repeal of all such statutes.

whom he should name to her. She answered That he knew very well, *Saul* had cut off all those of that profession; and why should he go about to lay such a snare for her, to have her destroyed? He replied with a solemn oath, by the living GOD, That no evil should happen to her upon that account. She then demanded, Whom he would have raised? He answered, *Samuel*. And the instant he pronounced his name\*, the woman saw *Samuel*, and shrieked out loud, in terror and surprize; and soon after asked the king, Why he had deceived her? for he was *Saul*. She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration *Saul* had for him; she knew that prophets were only sent to kings; and she knew, the poor deluded mortals she had to do with, had no notion of having any commerce with persons of sacred character; and she knew her art, whatever that was, had never exhibited a person of that figure to her.

WHEN the king heard her cry out in such terror, he bad her not be afraid; and asked her, What she saw? She answered, That she saw *gods* (or, as the word may be translated, *lords*) ascending out of the earth. *Saul* then inquired after his form; and she told him, It was that of an old man covered with a mantle.

\* Here the *English* translators have inserted the particle *when*: *And when the woman saw Samuel*. Which would imply, that some space of time had passed between *Saul's* request, and the appearance of *Samuel*—Whereas the original text stands thus: When *Saul* said, *Bring me up Samuel*, then immediately follows—*And the woman saw Samuel, and cried, &c.*

The text then immediately adds, that *Saul perceived, that it was Samuel himself; and stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.*

THE narration is short and uncircumstantial; but, as I humbly apprehend, the matter was thus :

SAUL, to prevent all delusion, would not tell the *Pythonefs* whom he would have raised, until he brought her to the very cell\*, or place of her incantations; and then he told her, he would have *Samuel* called up to him. And the instant he said this, she, looking into her cell, saw *Samuel*; and, seeing him so unexpectedly, and without the aid of her art, she was affrighted, and cried out: and the king, upon inquiry, hearing that it was an old man with a mantle, believed it was *Samuel* she saw; and straightway going to the cell, and perceiving† the prophet, did him obeisance. Immediately *Samuel* asked him, Why he had disquieted him, to bring him up? (Will not this ground a presumption, that the *Pythonefs* had not disturbed him by her incantations? for if she had, the question had been more naturally directed to her) To which *Saul* answered, That he was sore distressed; for the *Philistines* warred against him, and GOD had forsaken him, and would

\* For I believe it can be no doubt, that persons of that character, had, all, places peculiarly set apart for those accursed rites; and we have reason to believe, from the xxix<sup>th</sup> of *Ijaiab*, ver. 4. that they were caverns or cells under ground.

† The original word signifies *knowing*, and sometimes *seeing*.



neither answer him by dreams, nor prophets: *Therefore* (says he) *I have called unto thee\**, *that thou mayst make known unto me what I shall do.*

*Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me; seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the Lord hath done for himself, as he spake by me; for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even unto David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day.*

IN this we see the prophet foretels, that *Saul* should that day be stript of the kingdom; and that the kingdom should be divided, and given to *David*. Then follows, what nothing but infinite and unerring prescience could predict; an exact, minute, precise account of all the circumstances of the then depending event; *Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel, with thee, unto the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me; and also the camp of Israel shall the Lord deliver into the hands of the Philistines.*

I OWN, I am astonished at the inattention (shall I call it!) or impiety, or both, of those critics and commentators, who could ascribe

\* *Saul* expresses himself here in the same terms that *David* makes use of to signify his praying to G O D: which persuades me, that *Saul* invoked him, as some deluded Christians do saints and angels.

this prediction to the sagacity of an impostor, or even of the devil. I shall take a proper time to refute them; and, in the mean time go on with my history.

WHEN *Saul* heard this dreadful sentence pronounced upon himself, his family, and his people, the terror of it struck him to the heart; and he hastened to get away from that fatal place: but as he went, his fears operating upon a mind weakened with guilt, and upon a body exhausted with fatigue and fasting, he lost all power of motion, and fell at his full length upon the floor. The woman, seeing this, ran up to him; and, finding the distressed and weak condition he was in, endeavoured to persuade him, as well as she could, to take some sustenance: which he absolutely refused. Then, calling his servants to her aid, they all, in a manner, compelled him to consent: *So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed. And the woman had a fat calf in the house, and she hastened and killed it; and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof; and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants, and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.*

WHAT remorse, what despair, what desolation of mind, what horrors of guilt, what terrors, and anticipations of divine vengeance, haunted him by the way; may no reader of this history ever learn from his own experience!

## C H A P. XXIII.

*Other Opinions upon this Head examined,*

I FIND many learned men of a different opinion from me, in relation to the reality of *Samuel's* appearance on this occasion: some imagining, that it was an evil spirit that now appeared unto *Saul*; and others, that the whole was the work of imposture.

I SHALL give my reasons; and the reader will judge for himself.

IN the first place, then, I readily agree with one party of those that differ from me, that neither this *Pythonefs*, nor all the devils in hell, could raise up *Samuel*; nor is there one tittle in the whole narration, to support or countenance such a persuasion: but I differ intirely from them, in supposing all this the work of a juggler.

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE I can see nothing ascribed, in this relation, to *Samuel*, which is not intirely out of character in an impostor, or absolutely out of the power of the subtilest impostor that ever lived. And,

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE I have as good an opinion of the author of this history, his ability, his integrity, his knowledge of what he wrote about, and his undesigning to deceive, as I can have of any man that ever commented or criticized upon it: and therefore, when he gives



me to understand, that the woman saw *Samuel*, I absolutely believe, that she did.

ALLOW that the Scripture speaks of things according to their appearances, and that *Saul* and his companions might be deceived by an impostor in *Samuel's* guise; Was this author deceived, or did he mean to deceive me, when he gives me to understand, that *the woman saw Samuel*, and was frightened at the sight?

SUPPOSE a possibility, that *Saul* and his companions could be imposed upon by an impostor on this occasion; yet, surely, the highest probability is on the other side. *Saul* was far from having an implicit faith even in *Samuel*, although the manner of his coming to the kingdom demonstrated the divinity of the prophet's mission. And would he easily be the dupe of a silly woman? He was perfectly acquainted with the voice, stature, and figure of *Samuel*. He was a brave man; and, doubtless, his companions were so. Can we doubt whether he chose two of his old tried friends on this occasion? And, if he did, they all must have been acquainted with *Samuel*. They came upon the woman by night, and unprepared. Had they allowed her the least time for juggle or artifice, or suffered her so much as one moment out of their sight; would a sacred historian, whose business it was to expose these practices, as far as truth would allow, omit these circumstances? Would he omit all mention of the preceding sacrifices and incantations? Would he omit every circumstance that tended to detect the fraud?

Would

Would he omit every thing that tended to shew it to be fraud, and insert every thing that tended to imply the real appearance of the prophet?

SHALL this author relate in plain terms, that *Saul perceived it was Samuel himself*\*? And shall he relate this by a word which signifies either certain knowledge, experience, or sensible perception? And are we to understand by this word, (contrary to all the rules of grammar, and rational interpretation) that he neither knew, nor had sensible evidence of this? that he only imagined it was *Samuel*, by the description of an impostor? a description that would suit ten thousand other men as well as *Samuel*!

BUT the text says not, that *Saul saw Samuel*.

TRUE: but it tells us something that plainly implies it; that *he stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself*.

WHEN *Jacob met Esau*, (*Gen. xxxiii. 3.*) the text tells us, that the *handmaids, and Leah, and Rachel, and their children, bowed themselves*; the sacred penman does not tell us, that they saw *Esau*, or that it was to him they bowed. Are we to believe, for this reason, that they did not see him? or did not bow to him upon seeing him?

WHEN *David arose out of his hiding-place*, upon the signal that *Jonathan* gave him, the text tells us, (*I Sam. xx. 41.*) that *he fell upon his face to the ground, and bowed himself*. The text tells us not, either that he saw *Jona-*

\* It is astonishing, that the *English* translation should leave out this last word, *himself*.

*than*, or bowed to *Jonathan*. Does any man doubt, for that reason, that he did not see him? or did not bow to him, because he saw him?

WHEN the messenger from *Saul's* camp came to *David* at *Ziklag*, the text tells us, that *he fell to the earth, and did obeisance* \*. There is no mention either of his seeing *David*, or bowing to him. Are we to doubt, for that reason, whether he did see him? It were easy to add other instances. When the sacred writers express themselves in the same style, and in the very same words, on occurrences of the same kind, such as the behaviour of people upon occasion of seeing some extraordinary person; are we not to understand them in the same sense?

THE text is still stronger and fuller in this place. It first says, that *Saul knew, that it was Samuel himself*; and then adds, that *he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself*. Must we believe, notwithstanding all this, that he neither knew nor saw what he bowed to? that he bowed only to a creature of the *Pythonefs's* imagination †? What strange suppositions are these! and what violence must we do to the sacred text, to the analogy of Scripture, to

\* The same word is here rendered, *did obeisance*, which, in this action of *Saul's*, is translated, *bowed himself*; and, in the margin of *Pagnin's Bible*, is translated, *adored*.

† But some think this must be an evil spirit, because he does not reprove *Saul* for doing him obeisance. The truth is, such observers are scarce worth regarding; since this was undoubtedly no more than a civil salutation.



common grammar, and to common sense, to gratify some dogmatic doubters\*!

BUT *Saul* was frightened out of his wits, and did not know what he said or did.

I AM very much inclined to think, that they who surmise this, believe it.

BUT, pray, how does it appear? The gentlemen, that object thus, have not, perhaps, considered, that *Saul* desired *Samuel* to be raised up to *him* † (not to the *Pythonefs*); which plainly shews, that he had no apprehension of fear, from the thoughts of seeing him. And when the woman was frightened, and shrieked at the sight of *Samuel*, it is plain, that *Saul* was not; for he bids her not be afraid §; and desires to know what it was she saw, which could cause her fears: *Be not afraid; for what sawest thou?*

\* I mean here to censure those only, who think their doubting a sufficient reason why others should disbelieve. A modest and a candid doubter is a most amiable character.

† *Bring up Samuel to me.*

§ But it is urged, that she knew *Saul* before, from the advantage of his stature, and that her fears were only pretended; not arising from the sight of *Samuel*, but from the fear of *Saul*. But why? *Saul* had already given her all the assurance of safety that he could give; and it is plain, he apprehended her fears arose from the sight of *Samuel*; for he gives her no more assurances now, and only bids her not be afraid; asking, *For what sawest thou?* Which plainly shews, that he apprehended she was frightened at what she saw, and that he himself was not. And if he was not, he could not be imposed upon. The text tells us, indeed, that he was exceedingly terrified at what *Samuel* told him: which grounds a fair presumption, that he was in no fright before; for, if he had, surely that also had been told. Could any thing be more unfaithful in an historian, than to conceal his fears upon one head, and to relate them upon another? to conceal them where they tended to detect the imposture, (if there was any) and to relate them where that relation could only tend to establish it?

And

And the whole tenor of his answer to *Samuel's* question is as rational and undisturbed as any thing I ever read.

IN the next place, let us consider, whether this person, supposed to be an impostor, acts in character.

ARE we to believe, that a little contemptible juggler (supposing such a person, without any foundation in the history) or a poor dastardly woman, would dare to treat a king of *Israel* with that air of superiority, and contumely wherewith *Samuel* treats *Saul* on this occasion? Would she, that paid such court to him the instant the affair was over, treat him with so high an hand whilst it was in agitation? *Josephus* observes of this woman, that she was in her nature gentle, compassionate, and beneficent. Is this agreeable to that character? to insult, to threaten, and to upbraid?—to ask him, to the reproach of his reason and religion, as well as the disgrace of her own art, how he came to inquire of her?—Would she dare to treat *Saul* so? *Saul*, famed for rage and resentment, and not famed for mercy; *Saul*, that rooted the race of impostors out of the land! And all this after it was owned she knew him! He must have as much credulity as an infidel, that can believe this.

IN the next place: Would an impostor be so very zealous for a strict observance of the law and commands of GOD; and so rigid in pronouncing divine vengeance upon the violation of them? and, in the depth of his cunning, li-  
mit,

mit that vengeance to time, place, and person? and all this at no greater distance than the next day?

THESE suppositions are too wild to be seriously confuted? they are the very reverse of what should and would have been done on such an occasion, had imposture interfered in it. Every one knows, the business of impostors is to flatter, to delude, to deceive, to answer doubtfully; to promise good, and put off the evil: it was this woman's business in a particular manner to act thus. Had she promised *Saul* victory, and the success had answered, she was sure of considerable advantage. He who could have no benefit from priests, or from prophets, would, doubtless, have had her in high honour, and with good reason.

IF he died in the battle, all was safe; and even if he escaped, and was worsted, what she said, would at least have been taken for an indication of good-will and good-wishes to the king, and to his people; and so would be more likely to escape any after-inquiry: whereas, if she prognosticated evil to the royal race, she was sure of destruction, if the event did not at once justify and save her. Nay, it might justify, and yet not save her: For, might not *Saul's* companions, or some of his surviving friends, think that this evil fortune was the effect of her incantations, and the work of some wicked spirits under her influence? And would she, who knew her own ignorance, put all this to the hazard of a conjecture? And would GOD make the event exactly



exactly and minutely conformable to that conjecture, to establish the credit of imposture over the face of the earth, and to the end of the world?

BUT it is urged, that an impostor might easily know what passed between *Samuel* and *Saul* in relation to *Amalek*; an impostor might know, that the *Philistines* were much stronger, and therefore would conquer; and that *Saul* and his sons would rather die, than fly or yield.

SUPPOSE this;—suppose such wretched creatures as these; suppose the wisest of the fallen angels exactly acquainted with the conversation, with the very style and phraseology which passed between *Samuel* and *Saul* in relation to *Amalek*; and passed, for aught appears, betwixt those two only; suppose them to know, (what hath no foundation in the text \*) that the *Philistines* were now much stronger, more numerous, as well as in much better heart, than the *Israelites*; Did it follow, that the *Philistines* must conquer and kill all before them? Have greater and stronger armies always conquered from the foundation of the world? Or, hath the matter of fact, generally speaking, been quite otherwise? Were not the *Philistines* yet stronger and more numerous, some years before? and the *Israelites*, beyond all comparison, less numerous, and more affrighted, hiding them-

\* It should seem from the text, that *Saul* had now the greatest army that ever the *Israelites* brought into the field; for it plainly tells us, that he had gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa, 1 Sam. xxviii. 4.

selves in woods, and rocks, and caves, and reduced at last to six hundred men, without one spear or sword among them all? And did the *Philistines* conquer for these reasons? Quite otherwise.—See I *Sam.* ch. xiii. and xiv.

I WILL go one step farther:—Suppose the subtlest spirit in hell to know, that GOD had forsaken *Saul*; and suppose him to know, from the experience of ages, that *they* are doomed to sure destruction, whom GOD hath forsaken: Could he foresee, for that reason, the time of his destruction? No;—the times and the seasons are solely in the hand of GOD.

IN the time of the battle just now mentioned, *Saul* had just then greatly offended GOD: *Samuel* had just then denounced the divine vengeance and deposition upon him for it: and yet *Saul*, not contented to profane the altar with impious and unhallowed hands, had the hardness, knowing himself under the divine displeasure, to call for the *ephod* to consult GOD; and, after all this, rushed into battle, without waiting for his answer. Then, surely, if ever, might human or satanic wisdom have pronounced his fate, as far as impiety, as far as provoking, and being deserted by GOD, deserved it; and that signal inferiority of his forces foretold it. And yet, had *Satan* so pronounced, the event had shewn him as strangely deceived. What he could not pronounce then, could he, and would he dare to pronounce now? And if *he* could not, could any thing inferior? Could a poor groveling impostor pronounce it, upon  
the

the foot of much less probability! infinitely less knowledge and greater hazard!

BUT an evil spirit, or even an impostor, might know, that *Saul* and his sons were determined either to die, or conquer in the battle.

LET this also be allowed, without any foundation in the text: Hath not many a man been determined to die; and yet been prevented? But the truth is otherwise: neither *Saul* nor his sons were determined to die; they all fled from the enemy as fast, and as far, as they could. The enemy first overtook the sons of *Saul*, and slew them: and when *Saul* could fly no farther, rather than fall into the enemy's hands, who were hard at his heels, he killed himself.

BESIDES all this: Shall we so far outrage our reason and our religion, as to believe any being, but GOD, capable of seeing into futurity, and pronouncing upon it? If there be any that think so, let me call upon them, with *Isaiah*, to bring forth their strong reasons. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen: Let them shew the former things what they be, that we may consider (or set our hearts upon) them; or declare us things for to come.

—In one word: The assertions and reasonings on the other side seem to be grounded upon great mistakes, and fruitful of grievous absurdities. I cannot assent to them; I envy no man that can.

THE consequence from all this is clear: If that person, who now denounced the divine



vengeance upon *Saul* under the resemblance of *Samuel*, was neither an impostor, nor an evil spirit; he must be, what the Scriptures constantly call him throughout this narration, *Samuel*.

THAT spirits of another world may carry about them such vehicles, as may admit them to a sensible commerce with us, in like manner as our spirits bear about these bodies of ours, the best philosophy will admit. And that they have done so upon extraordinary occasions, the most authentic histories in the world will attest. If then GOD Almighty thought fit either to appoint, or permit, *Samuel* to appear to *Saul* on this occasion; I see no more difficulty in it, than in his appearing to him on any other occasion whilst he was in this world, and in full health and strength. For *Saul* no more saw his spirit then, than he did now; and his spirit was as well able to bear a body about with it now, as it was then.

THE only question then is, Why GOD should appoint, or permit, *Samuel* to appear on this occasion? And this is a question which no man living hath a right to ask, and be informed in. Such questions as these are the very source and fountain-head of all infidelity:—*I don't know why things should be done so and so; and therefore I will not believe they were done.*—And what is this, but saying, in other words, that you are as wise as GOD; and as good a judge of fit and just, at least with regard to things of this world, as He can be? And therefore it is  
ridiculous

ridiculous to suppose, that he transacted any thing in the affairs of this world, which you cannot discover to be wise, and fit, and just. Can any thing in nature be more extravagant than such surmises as these?

“ BUT is it likely, that GOD should refuse  
 “ to answer *Saul*, when he consulted him in  
 “ ways appointed by himself, and yet should  
 “ answer him in a forbidden way.\*?”

I ANSWER: What if it be not? that is, What if my little understanding cannot reach the reasons of this conduct? Must it follow, that there was no such thing? Is not this the same infatuation of arrogance which was just now reprov'd and expos'd?

BUT, after all; What if GOD did not depart from his own institutions? What if *Saul* did not consult him in ways appointed by Himself? The ways appointed by Himself to consult him, were by prophets, to whom he manifested himself in visions, as he did to *Samuel*; or by prophets, to whom he vouchsafed a more open communication of his purposes, as to *Moses*; or by *Urim* and *Thummim*.

IT is not likely, that *Saul* consulted GOD by the *Urim* and *Thummim* of his own appointment; for that was with *Abiathar*, and *Abiathar* with *David*. And, very probably, there was no prophet then alive, to whom GOD communicated himself either by vision, or by his word.

\* *Discourse on Witchcraft, &c.* p. 11.

MANY learned men have thought the conduct of GOD, on this occasion, to be in near conformity, and exact analogy, to what he did after in the case of *Abaziah* (2 Kings, *ch.* i.): *Abaziah* was very ill, from a fall through the lattice of one of his upper chambers; and, in his anxiety to know the event, he ordered some of his servants to inquire of *Baal-zebub*, the idol of *Ekron*, about his recovery: but, before his messengers could reach the idol, GOD sent his prophet to stop them short, and to pronounce their master's fate.

SAUL, in danger, and anxious about the event of it, applies to a *Pythonefs*, to assist him by her incantations, and to call up the spirit of *Samuel*: but, before she begins one word of her spells or charms, the prophet interposes, frightens her, and pronounces *Saul's* doom; and she herself witnesses the truth of his appearance. There is indeed, this difference, that *Abaziah* applied to the idol, without ever applying to any prophet; which *Saul* is said to have done: but that he did this with any seriousness, or right sense of religion, is not believed, and, if he did not, he was, doubtless, as wicked in applying, as *Abaziah* in not applying.

ON the other hand: What if *Saul* did consult GOD in a way appointed of himself; and, What if GOD did depart from his own institutions on this occasion? Is GOD so tied down to his own institutions, that he cannot at any time depart from them?

HERE



HERE is a fine *dilemma*: If GOD confines the communication and manifestation of himself, and his purposes to priests and prophets; *Are all the rest of his creation excluded? Is he the God only of priests and prophets? All this is artifice and contrivance, plain priest-craft!* If at any time he is said to have manifested himself in a different manner, such accounts are incredible; for is it likely he should depart from his own institutions?

BUT still it may be urged; Is it likely he should manifest himself in a way which he himself had forbidden?

I ANSWER; That GOD should manifest himself by his prophets, to encourage or countenance what he himself had forbidden, is, indeed, exceedingly unlikely; or, to speak more justly, is very absurd to suppose. But that he should interpose to reprove that practice, is, with great submission, no way incredible or improbable.

I BEG leave to observe, That the 6th and 7th verses of the cxxxix<sup>th</sup> psalm seem to allude to this passage; and the sudden interposition of GOD by his prophet, where he was least expected: *Whither shall I go then from thy Spirit? or whether shall I go then from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: if I go down to hell, thou art there.* Now, what we render, *Thou art there*, in this last clause, is, in the original, *Lo! thou*; expressing a kind of surprize, upon the suddenness and unexpectedness of the divine appearance.

BUT, if *Samuel* had been raised by GOD, no doubt he never would have said unto *Saul*, *Why hast thou disquieted me?* for it would have been no disquiet or trouble to him, to come upon GOD's errand\*.

BUT is this gentleman sure, that the prophet's disquiet arose from his being sent on that errand? Surely, he will not say so, upon better deliberation. No; his disquiet plainly arose from *Saul's* hardened impenitence in the ways of irreligion; it was this that grieved and provoked his righteous spirit. And so it should be translated, *Why hast thou provoked me, to make me rise up?* Why dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee? Hath GOD forsaken you? and do you hope for health from *me*? from me, his minister, who act nothing but in obedience to his will? Is GOD offended with you, and will you inquire what to do, in a way that he hath forbidden? Will you go on still to offend him more and more? Know then, that I am now come to confirm that sentence, which GOD long since past upon you by my mouth, for disobeying his commandments: *Your kingdom is divided, and given to David*; and GOD will deliver you, your sons and your people, into the hands of the *Philistines*: and this sentence shall be executed upon you to-morrow: to-morrow shall you and your sons be with me among the dead. All this is plainly spoken in the indignation of a righteous spi-

\* *Discourse on Witchcraft, &c.* p. 11.

rit against guilt; and he must have read it with very little attention, that does not see it to be so.

BUT *Samuel* appeared with a mantle. A mantle was not, that we know of, any part of the prophetic garb: or, if it were, it is pretty evident from some parts of the Scripture, that when these persons prophesied, they put off their upper raiment.

I ANSWER: That when *Samuel* denounced GOD'S judgments upon *Saul*, he was clad in a mantle; which *Saul* tore on that occasion. He now came to repeat and to ratify the sentence then denounced; and, to strike him with fuller conviction, he appears in the same dress, the same mantle, in which he denounced that sentence. And, since he now again denounced a division of the kingdom, why may we not presume, that the mantle shewed now the same rent, which was the emblem of that division? Is it irrational to suppose, that, when he spoke of this division, he held up the mantle, and pointed to the rent? It is well known, the prophets were men of much action in their speaking (and often illustrate their predictions by emblems); and such action as I now mention, I think, could hardly be avoided on this occasion.

GIVE me leave to add, that the Bible is an history of GOD'S providence, more particularly to a peculiar people. It teaches us, that all revolutions in the world are of his appointment, and all events in his hands; that nations are punished, and kings deposed, for their guilt, and others



appointed in their stead. And, in order to convince his people of these great truths, GOD, at sundry times, raised up prophets from amongst them to denounce his judgments upon their guilt, and to foretel the fatal consequences of it. If they repented upon these monitions, his judgments were averted; if not, they were surely executed.

NOW what is the infidel objection to these prophets? Why, truly, they were wild enthusiastic men, who foretold things at a venture: if they came to pass, well and good, their credit was established; if they did not, why, then, something happened that altered the case. They never wanted evasions; they had always some shift to bring themselves off.—For example:

How might this history be objected to? *Samuel*, in his life-time, often reprov'd *Saul* for his guilt; and told him, that GOD had given away his kingdom from him for that guilt: but he never told him to whom, nor when the sentence should be executed upon him.

IT is true, *Saul* died in battle; and *David*, after some time, succeeded him. Who knows that this was the effect of that sentence? *David* might have died before this happened, and another might have succeeded him, instead of *David*. Neither *Saul*, nor many of his court, believed one word that *Samuel* said: And why should we? His kingdom was given away many years before, and yet *Saul* was in full possession of it still: Could there be a subject of more mockery

mockery upon prophets, and priests, and priestcraft, than this?

HOLD! say the Scriptures;—the sentence is sure, and shall be executed, though it be respited, and the criminal reprieved. And, to evince this, beyond all possibility of doubt, God raises the same prophet, that predicted this event; and at the very instant of predicting it, cautioned him against the guilt of divination\*: I say, that prophet, who predicted this sentence, God now raises up from the dead, to confirm that sentence; to tell him, that the kingdom was that day to be taken from him, and would be divided; to name the very person to whom it was given;—to confirm the sentence beyond all possibility of cavil;—to shew by whom, and when, and where, and how it was to be executed;—to shew, that the execution of it was instant, and should be deferred no longer than the very next day:—Was not this an occasion worthy of the divine interposition! Was not this *Dignus Deo vindice notus*?

ONE would think all this were sufficient to silence infidelity: but, alas! the human vanity and perverseness are not so easily quelled. It is possible still to object; That it was not *Samuel* that did all this.

Now the case stands thus:—The Scriptures say, *Samuel* was seen on this occasion;—that *Saul* perceived it was *Samuel himself*;—that *Samuel* spoke and denounced the divine judg-

\* 1 Sam. xv. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, (in Heb. divination) and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry.*

ments,—and *Saul* heard him;—and the judgments he denounced were demonstrably such, as none but GOD could denounce. And some men, that call themselves critics, without attending to the text, the nature of the prophet's threats, or the reason of his appearance, say, it was not *Samuel* that did all this, but some impostor, or some evil spirit; and they say this upon the idlest reasons that ever were urged; reasons, that have already been abundantly confuted and exposed. And can it yet be made a question, which we shall believe?

I HAVE but two observations to annex: The first is; That the son of *Sirach*, who seems to have had as much wisdom, penetration, and piety, as any critic that came after him, is clearly of opinion with the sacred historian, that it was *Samuel himself*, who foretold the fate of *Saul* and his house in this interview. And it is no ill presumption, that his judgment was also that of the *Jewish* church upon this head.

THE next is; That whereas it hath been made a question, Whether the *Jews* had any belief of the immortality of the soul? this history is a full decision upon that point: and, perhaps, the establishment of that truth upon the foot of sensible evidence, was not the lowest end of *Samuel's* appearance upon this occasion.



C H A P. XXIV.

*David goes with Achish to the Rendezvous of the Philistine Army at Aphek. The Philistine Lords would suffer him to go no farther. What ensued thereupon.*

IT is now time to return to DAVID.

WE may easily apprehend, to what streights he was reduced, upon *Achish's* insisting, that he must go with him against *Saul*; he was now under a necessity either of warring against his country, or betraying his benefactor. The alternative was, indeed, distressful: but it is easy to see how a man of honour must determine himself under it. His prince had banished and outlawed him, innocent; and his people had joined in the sentence. Nevertheless, he continued, as long as he could, not only not to injure either, but even to be beneficent to both. To be merciful and long-suffering, to repay cruelty with tenderness, and baseness with beneficence, he well knew was the noblest character and resemblance of the Divinity; but it is His only to be unwearied in well doing!

DAVID would have still been beneficent, if he could; but the times would not let him: and therefore when things were brought to that extremity, that either he must fight against a  
 people

people who had made him their enemy, or betray a prince that had protected him in distress, he had no choice left. He owed *Achish* allegiance, (for protection exacts allegiance) but he owed *Saul* none; and there is no doubt but he was determined to pay his debt. And therefore I cannot help thus far crediting the account *Josephus* gives us of this matter, that he promised *Achish* his aid; and assured him, he would take this occasion to requite his kindness the best he could. He promised him, says *Grotius*, as *Themistocles* did the *Persons*, ἐκὼν, ἀέκωντι γε θυμῷ. — That he promised him unwillingly, I have no doubt; and I can have none, that he promised him faithfully. The author of the viith psalm could not act in another manner, and at the same time make so solemn an appeal to God for his integrity. (And what if this psalm were written in vindication of himself from some calumny raised of him upon this head?) *O Lord my God, if I have done any such thing, or if there be any such wickedness in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that dealt friendly with me: yea, I have delivered him, that without any cause is mine enemy.* The man that could save *Saul*, could not betray *Achish*.

AND here I must once more observe, upon Mr. *Bayle's* singular candour: He is very angry with *David* for deceiving *Achish*, where the deceit was no way injurious; and, in the next breath, falls foul upon him, for resolving to be faith-

faithful where infidelity had, in all probability, been fatal to his benefactor.

THIS we know, the person of the king was committed to *David's* trust and care; for, when he marched, we find it was in the rear, attending upon the king's person.

ACHISH could be no stranger to the inviolable reverence which *David* had paid to the regal character; and therefore, probably, thought he should be safer in his keeping, than if he committed himself to his own people, who do not seem to have had altogether so great a veneration for him. And *David*, doubtless, would gladly content himself with discharging that trust; avoiding, as much as he could, to engage in the carnage of his countrymen; or, perhaps, as he now perfectly understood the interests of both countries, he had some scheme of accommodation to propose, which might, for the present, adjust and determine their dispute. Besides all this, *Jonathan* was in the adverse army: let the generous reader ask his own heart, whether *David* might not have a secret pleasure, in the prospect, in the possibility, of saving his friend's life in the day of battle.

BUT, whatever his purposes were, it pleased God to deliver him out of all his difficulties, by inspiring the *Philistine* lords with such a jealousy of him, as made them absolutely refuse to go to battle with him; in reality, perhaps, from secret envy and indignation, to see him thus honourably distinguished by their prince; but  
 professedly,



professedly, upon a suspicion, that he might purchase his reconciliation with *Saul*, at the price of betraying them to him, or joining against them in a critical juncture. Nor was their apprehension without appearance of reason: for so their *Hebrew* associates (whether slaves or subjects, I cannot say) served them, in the battle so happily (if not miraculously) begun by *Jonathan* and his armour-bearer (1 *Sam.* xiv.). And, doubtless, it was in memory of this, that, seeing *David* and his men marching with *Achish*, they asked the king, *What do these Hebrews here?* At which *Achish*, surpris'd, and wondering they should not know this man, and his importance, cried out, That it was *David*, the servant of *Saul*. Could they be strangers to *David*, and his merits, who had been so long with him, and behaved himself so well?

THEY knew very well who he was, and gave their king to understand as much: they knew that he was king-elect of the land, and more set by than even *Saul* himself; and therefore it was so much the more dangerous to trust him. This was right reasoning.

IT is true, *David* had too much honour to betray his benefactor; and knew *Saul* too well to think of any scheme of reconciliation with him, or to trust to the influence any benefaction could have upon him; and therefore neither policy nor honour could allow him to go into any schemes prejudicial to the interest of *Achish*. But the *Philistine* lords might see all this in another light: very probably, they heard of *David's*

*vid's* late excess of generosity to *Saul*; and very possibly (not considering the devil that dwelt within him) they had no idea of such depravity, as could harden the human heart in an invincible enmity to such a benefactor;—and they might imagine him sent away by *Saul* (as *Darius* sent *Zopyrus*) under a shew of enmity, on purpose to betray them. And, possibly, *David* himself might have found out some method of inspiring them with such a jealousy (as *Themistocles* did the *Persians* on a different occasion). But, however it was, they absolutely refused to let *David* join them: and *David*, secure of being refused, appeared more urgent to be admitted to share in the danger; but the lords were determined to the contrary. And therefore the king, comforting him as well as he could, under the indignity that was done him\*,  
 advised

\* It is observable, that *Achish*, on this occasion, makes use of that form of swearing, which obtained among the *Jews*, *As the Lord liveth*.—From which some have concluded, that *Achish* had learned some part of *David's* religion; and others go into great extremes on the other side; which, I own, I can see no grounds for. *David* was a man of sufficient address; he well knew how to converse with kings: nor was *Achish* the first, whose favour his accomplishments had acquired him. In all probability, he stipulated for the free exercise of his religion, before he threw himself into his service; and such a stipulation might naturally be attended with an apology in its favour. Nor will *David's* character suffer us to suspect him so cold and unconcerned in that point, as to omit any opportunity of recommending his religion to the best advantage: for, surely, no mortal ever had it more at heart; especially after that declaration, which he himself hath made in the *cxix<sup>th</sup>* psalm, sect. 6. (*Vau.*): *I will speak of thy testimonies also even before kings, and will not be ashamed.* What wonder then, if *David* should have instructed, and *Achish* profited in this point,  
 from

advised him to return with all expedition, for fear of farther exasperating them; and he did accordingly. And this advice (How adorable is the great God in the purposes of his providence!) rescued *David* from infinite distress. For, leaving the *Philistines* to pursue their way to *Jes-reel*, he rose up early in the morning, and returned to *Ziklag*, (being joined on the road by some excellent soldiers and eminent captains of the tribe of *Manasseh*) and reached it in three days. But how great was their surprize, and how inexpressible their grief, to find it utterly desolated, and burnt down to the ground! for the *Amalekites*, determined upon revenge, and taking the opportunity of *Achish* and *David's* absence with their forces, ravaged the borders of *Judah* and *Palestine*, took *Ziklag*, destroyed all the men that were left for its defence, burnt the city, and carried away all the women and children captives.

DAVID and his men, as it was natural, gave way to the first transports of their grief on this sad sight: *They wept* (says the text) *until they had no more power to weep;—and David was greatly distressed.* And, to add to his affliction, his men mutiny'd, and, in their despair, threatened to stone him: *And they spake of stoning*

from *David's* conversation? But, after all, possibly *Achish* might have sworn by *Jehovah* on this occasion, as that *Jew* did by *Jesus*, whom a great man § of the last age so properly (and with so fine a satire upon that profaneness too common among Christians) reprov'd, for his assurance in presuming to swear like a Christian.

§ The old duke of *Ormond*: *This rascally Jew* (said he) *has the impudence to swear like a Christian.*

*him;*



him; because the soul of all the people was grieved, (was bitter, says the original) every man for his sons, and for his daughters: but David comforted himself in God: He had always a sure resource in the power, promises, and providence of GOD.

WHEN he had appeased them as well as he could, he immediately sent for *Abiathar* and the *ephod*; and inquired of GOD what to do in that exigency; whether to pursue the enemy, and with what hopes of success. And, having received this gracious and encouraging answer, *Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake, and without fail recover*; he obeyed with all expedition, marching on with the six hundred men that attended him; until he reached the brook *Besor*, which runs between *Gaza* and *Beersheba*.

HERE two hundred of his forces, being utterly exhausted, and faint with so long, and so continued a march for many days together, were left behind to guard the baggage; and *David*, with the other four hundred, continued his pursuit.

ON the way, finding a young man sick and faint for want of food, they administered proper refreshment to him; and, as this took up some time, they, probably, made use of this occasion to take some refreshment themselves.

WHEN he had recovered his spirits, and his speech, he told them, upon inquiry, that he was an *Egyptian*, and belonged to an *Amalekite*, who had left him there, three days before, sick,

and destitute of all manner of support, upon their return from an expedition against *Judah*, and the south of the *Cherethites*, and of *Caleb*; in which invasion they had taken and burnt *Ziklag*. And being asked, Whether he could engage to guide them to that party? he, upon a solemn oath of safety, and not being given up to his master, (whose cruelty he had sufficiently experienced \*) undertook to do so; being, without doubt, acquainted with the place appointed for their rendezvous, after they thought themselves sufficiently out of danger.

WHAT he undertook, he faithfully performed; and *David* came upon the company, in the end of the night, *spread abroad* (as the text expresses it) *upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing*, thinking themselves now quite out of danger from *David*, as well they might †, and revelling for joy of their good success, and the great spoil they had taken out of the land of the *Philistines*, and out of the land of *Judah*.

WHEN *David* saw this, he waited, as some imagine, until they fell asleep; and assaulted them in that condition the next morning: but I think it is not probable, that so many men should wait tamely, and suffer their wives and

\* Surely, the leaving such a slave, sick with fatiguing in his master's service, in an enemy's country, and utterly destitute of all the necessaries of life, in the midst of unpurchased plenty, is one of the strongest instances of inhumanity that ever was heard of. This is a true specimen of *Amalekite* mercy.

† *Securum hostem, ac successu rerum secordius agentem invadunt: caesi vigilantes, perrupta castra.* Tacit. Hist. II.

daughters to be exposed to the licentiousness of any one hour that might succeed to such a revel: none but a stranger to the spirit of the *Oriental*s could believe this. They saw every thing before them that could excite their valour, or inflame their vengeance: they fell instantly upon the enemy by the break of the day, and made a dreadful havock; nor ever ceased from the slaughter until night: *And David smote them* (says the text) *from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.*

THOSE valiant men of *Manasseh*, who fell in with *David*, upon his return from *Achish*, being excellent soldiers and leaders, and less fatigued than the rest of his forces, were of great service to him on this occasion.

WHAT crowned the success, was, that *David* and all his men recovered every man their wives and children, and every thing they had lost, together with all the plunder the enemy had taken elsewhere, vast flocks and herds of cattle, which they now separated from their own, and, in honour of their leader, (now repenting of their late insolence) distinguished by the name of *David's spoil*.

THIS success will, upon inquiry, appear so extraordinary, and so astonishing, that it is not easy to account for it, otherwise than from the peculiar superintendence of Providence over *David* and his concerns; and *David* himself was fully persuaded it was so: it is in this per-



suasion he cries out, at the xviiiith *Psalm*, *It is God that girdeth me with strength of war:—He maketh my feet like harts feet:—He teacheth mine hands to fight, and mine arm shall break even a bow of steel:—Thou hast made mine enemies to turn their backs upon me.*

THE peculiar interposition of Providence is seen in every circumstance of this adventure; —the number, the perseverance, the issue.

THAT they might not think their number did the work, GOD reduced them to four hundred, as he did *Gideon's* company to three (*Judges, ch. vii*): and therefore, when he commanded *David* to pursue, he in effect said to him, what he said before to *Gideon*; *Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.*

MANY others have been as fortunate in surprising, and as successful in slaughtering their enemies: but to have strength both for the carnage and pursuit for so many hours together, is altogether extraordinary. But what is yet more extraordinary, is, that he should recover all the captives unhurt, out of the hands of a people so abandoned, and so execrable, as the *Amalekites*!

SOME imagine, that these miscreant *Amalekites*, being poor, spared their captives from a prospect of profiting greatly by the sale of them: but others, with more reason, think they only respited their cruelty, to execute it to more advantage at their leisure. For my own part, I shall

shall pronounce nothing upon the matter: I have no distinct and particular idea of their avarice, but I think I have a very clear one of their cruelty; and I am persuaded, they spared their captives, from inveterate malice.

How beautiful a contemplation is it, to observe the signal goodness of God, and malignity of man, co-operating to the same end!

I SHALL add only this short observation, that two points are cleared from this relation: The first is, that the *Cherethites* were *Philistines*\*; the second, that the *Amalekites* were enemies to the *Philistines*. And therefore, however *David* might have acted beside the intentions of his benefactor, yet he certainly did not act against his interest, in destroying them.

As *David* returned, those of his forces who were too faint to follow him, being now recovered, went out to meet him; and he saluted them as became the common father of his people, and inquired kindly of their health: which some ill men of his attendants interpreting as an indication of kindness, immediately cried out, That they should have no part of the enemy's spoil, but be content with the recovery of what they had lost. This inhuman and iniquitous declaration *David* quickly controlled with a proper authority, tempered with singular piety, and well-judged calmness; *Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and*

\* 1 Sam. xxx. 14. 16.

delivered the company that came against us, into our hands. He then pronounced, That they who went down to battle, and they who staid behind to guard the goods and provisions of the army, should share alike in the enemy's spoil: well knowing, that there was as much merit in contributing to save a citizen, as to destroy an enemy; and that those who now staid behind, had no other demerit, than that of a weaker constitution.

CHALCOCONDYLAS tells us, (*lib. 5.*) that the *Pisidians* went further, and gave part of the spoil to those who staid at home, and guarded the houses: and GOD himself appointed half to those who staid at home in the war with *Midian* (*Numb. ch. xxxi.*).

THIS determination of *David's* became a law among the *Israelites*, from that day, to the time that this history was written: and we have reason to believe, that it lasted, after this, as long as the *Jewish* polity did, and was restored with it, and is generally understood to have been practised by the *Maccabees* (*2 Maccab. ch. viii.*)

I HAVE already observed, that as *David* returned from the *Amalekite* carnage, the soldiers separated the hostile flocks and herds, and called them *David's spoil*: and we find by the sequel, that they made good their words. For, when *David* returned to *Ziklag*, he sent presents to all his friends that had protected and entertained him in his exile, whether in *Judea*, or out of it. And, from the account of this matter left us in the sacred text, it appears,



pears, that *David* had, in his exile, sojourned in many places, whither the sacred historians did not think fit to trace him.

I SHOULD be glad to learn, from any candid reader, in what light this conduct of *David's* appears to him. I freely own, that, as often as I have read it, it never appeared to me in any other than that of an honest and overflowing gratitude for favours received: nor do I believe I ever should have had sagacity enough to see it in any other, if the penetrating Mr. *Bayle* had not taught me to look upon it in the light of bribery. He doth not, indeed, brand it by so harsh a name; he hath the goodness to abate of his usual severity to *David* on this occasion, and to call it only a *gaining of the chief men* (of his tribe) *by presents*; at the same time distinguishing the phrase by capitals, lest it should not sufficiently be noticed.

I THANK GOD, that he hath formed me with a plain and unrefining sight, that sees things only as they are shewn to me, and as they shine out in their natural light.

I READ in the text, that *David* sent presents to his friends; and I always imagined, that friends were persons already gained to our interest; and I imagined, that *David* had merit enough with the whole realm of *Israel*, to make some of them his friends, without bribery. I read, that the rovers the *Amalekites* had spoiled the South of *Judah*, and I did not know but *David* had a mind to make his friends some reparation for the da-

images they had sustained: I read also, that he had sent presents to the *Jerahmeelites* and *Kenites*, and all the places where he and his men were wont to haunt; and I imagine, to this day, that if he had nothing but self-interest in view, he had better have confined his favours to those of his own country.

EVERY one hath heard enough of bribing for some years past; and yet, as little scrupulous as some men are of their censures upon that head, (how justly, I neither mean to say, nor insinuate) I don't remember to have heard any man charged with bribing for an election before the borough was vacant, or the member sick, or the parliament dissolved, or its period expiring, and unknown. And if any man, in such an interval, should, upon some remarkable turn of fortune in his favour, send some presents to some near relations, or particular friends of that borough, to whom he was known to be greatly obliged, I can never be brought to believe, that such a conduct could justify the passing of a vote of corruption and bribery upon him.

## C H A P. XXV.

*The Battle of Mount Gilboa.*

THE reader will, I believe, now think it high time, that we resume the thread of our history, as far as it relates to *Saul*.

SAUL, as I humbly apprehend, was not long returned to his camp before the *Philistines* attacked it, and, after some time, gained it. There is no doubt but that he and his sons made all the resistance that might be expected from such great captains, and such valiant men; but to no purpose: when the *Philistines* had once forced their intrenchments, they bore down all before them.

AFTER a considerable slaughter, the *Israelites* fled; and *Saul* and his sons fled with the rest, but in vain; for the enemy pressed so close upon them, that *Jonathan* and his brethren\* were slain. *Saul* was yet alive, but faint, weary, and wounded; and, despairing to outgo his pursuers, he called to his armour-bearer to dispatch him, lest he should fall alive into the enemy's hands: *Draw thy sword, (said he) and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised thrust me through, and abuse me:* which his armour-bearer dreading to do, he himself took the sword, and fell upon it, and

\* *Abinadab* and *Malchishua*.

died;



died; and his armour-bearer quickly followed his example, and died by his side.

No sooner did the *Israelites* of the adjacent vale see the battle go against *Saul*, but they deserted their cities in the utmost consternation; which the *Philistines* quickly seized.

WHEN the *Philistines* came the next day to strip the slain, the text tells us, *they found Saul and his sons fallen upon mount Gilboa; and they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among their people, that public thank-givings might be made to their gods throughout the whole country.*

HIS head they fastened in the temple of *Dagon*\*, after they had stript off the hair and flesh; and they put his armour in the house of *Ashteroth* (these were their great idols, different in shape, but agreeing in the lewd ceremonials of their worship); and his body they fastened to the wall of *Beth-shan*; as they did those of his sons also. How they disposed of their heads and arms, is not said: but it is to be presumed, that they also were disposed of in like manner with those of their father.

I AM now at leisure, and I hope the reader is so too, to make some reflections upon this battle; and to consider some objections in relation to the preceding history.

\* 1 *Chron.* x. 10.

IN the first place, then ; I think it evident, from many concurring circumstances, that *Saul* was now attacked in his camp.

IN the next place ; I think it is as evident, from the tenor of the history, that he could not be long returned to his camp, before the *Philistines* attacked it.

AND, thirdly ; I think it highly probable, that they were encouraged to this attempt, by some secret information of *Saul's* having stolen out of the camp the evening before, with his general, (for *Abner* is supposed to have been one of his attendants) and another person : 1<sup>st</sup>, Because an intelligence of that kind was not hard to be had ; and, 2<sup>dly</sup>, Because the having it was the strongest encouragement to such an attempt.

THAT *Saul* was attacked, is, I think, not obscurely intimated in the text, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 1. *Now the Philistines fought against Israel.* Is it not evident from hence, that they began the fight ? (and so interpreters understand it \*) especially considering, that the word here rendered *fought*, might as properly have been translated *assaulted*.

THE text adds ; *And the men of Israel fled, and fell down in mount Gilboa.* From hence also I think it evident, that *Saul* was attacked

\* *Pugnâsse dicuntur Philistæi, quia ipsi ultro priores Israelitarum copias invaserunt.* Menoch. Poli Synopsis.



in his camp; for he was encamped upon *Gilboa*; and the battle was fought there, and the slaughter and the fight began there; whereas, had he attacked the *Philistines*, the battle had been fought at *Shunem*, where they were encamped.

WHAT puts this matter out of all doubt, is, the account of *Saul's* death, brought to *David* by the *Amalekite*, who is said to have come out of the camp from *Saul*. Now he came from where *Saul* lay dead; and therefore, since he came from *Saul's* camp, *Saul* died in his camp. And here we see the surprising exactness with which *Samuel's* prediction was fulfilled, when he told *Saul*, that on the very next day he should die, and his camp be taken: *Also the camp of Israel shall the Lord deliver into the hands of the Philistines.*

IT is allowed, that they who attack, have this advantage; that as the attempt is presumed to arise from superior courage, and confidence of success, the army attacked are, for the most part, intimidated by it, and are apt to fly, upon the least advantage gained against them. It is natural to reason, that if they could not keep off an enemy, with the advantage of their trenches, and other fences of their camp, they must be unable to deal with them upon equal terms.

THIS, in all probability, was the case of *Saul*, and his army, who now partly fell, and partly fled from the *Philistines*: *Saul* and his sons fled with the rest, and were hotly pursued. It is not to be imagined, as I before observed, that such  
brave



brave men as they were, could allow themselves to fly, before they had used their utmost efforts to repel the enemy. However, as *Saul* was warned of his fate, and as there is no doubt but he was desirous to elude it, he fled: and it is evident enough from the history, that he fled before his sons; for they (who, it is to be presumed, were as swift as he) were first overtaken, and slain, and the enemy had not yet reached him; when, seeing them in hot pursuit, and utterly despairing to escape, he called to his armour-bearer to dispatch him, as was now related.

HERE *Josephus*, in the fulness of his national spirit, runs out into high encomiums upon *Saul*, and would fain set him off as a consummate hero, and perfect pattern of patriotism, who, knowing he was to die, exposed himself and his family to destruction, and thought it glorious to die fighting for his country: but, in truth, there is not the least foundation for this high-flown panegyric.

WHAT his secret intentions were, is hard to say: but it is evident to a demonstration, that his fate was not the effect of choice; for it was forced upon him; he being, as I before observed, attacked in his camp, before he had any time to take any measures either for his own, or the common safety: and, when he found the battle going against him, he fled as fast and as far as he could; and, when he could fly no farther, he killed himself out of cowardice, for fear of falling alive into the hands

of the enemies, and suffering some indignities from them. How much nobler was the resolution of *Darius*, who, finding himself betrayed, and that he was to be either murdered by his own subjects, or delivered into the hands of *Alexander*, would not, however, be his own executioner! *I had rather* (says he) *die by another's guilt, than my own* (*Curt.* 1. 5. cap. 12.).

A TRULY brave man would have died fighting as *Jonathan* did, or would, at worst, glory in being abused, and even tortured for having done his duty! *Saul* then died, not as an hero, but a deserter. Self-murder is demonstrably the effect of cowardice; and it is as irrational and iniquitous, as it is base. GOD, whose creatures we are, is the sole Arbitrator, as he is the sole Author, of life: our lives are his property; and he hath given our country, our family, and our friends, a share in them. And therefore, as *Plato* finely observes in his *Phædo*, GOD is as much injured by Self-murder, as I should be by having one of my slaves killed without my consent: not to insist upon the injury done to others, in a variety of relations, by the same act.

IN the next place, I beg leave to observe, That *Saul* and his armour-bearer died by the same sword, which was the armour-bearer's.

THAT this armour-bearer died by his own sword, is out of all doubt; the text expressly tells us so. And that *Saul* perished by the same sword, is, I think, sufficiently evident: *Draw*

*thy sword*, says he to him, *and thrust me through*. Which when he refused, *Saul* (says the text) *took the sword\** (*habereb*), *and fell upon it*. What sword? (Not his own; for then the text would have said so) Why, in the plain, natural, grammatical construction, the sword before mentioned must be the sword now referred to; that is, his armour-bearer's.

Now it is the established tradition of the *Jewish* nation, that this armour-bearer was *Doeg* (and I see no reason why it should be discredited); and if so, then *Saul* and his executioner both fell by that very weapon, with which they had before massacred the priests of God. Remarks of this kind have sometimes fallen from the wisest and best historians, upon like occasions; with whom I shall be contented, shall be proud to be ridiculed.

It were easy to furnish the reader with sufficient instances: I shall only trouble him with three, all taken from *Plutarch*.

BRUTUS and *Cassius* killed themselves with the same swords with which they treacherously murdered *Cæsar*: I say, *treacherously murdered*; because they lay in his bosom at the same time that they meditated his death. And *Calippus* was stabbed with the same sword wherewith he stabbed *Dio*.

\* So the *English* translation renders that word in the 5th verse; and in the foregoing verse, *A sword*, 1 *Chron.* x. 4, 5. A negligence, which I am a good deal surpris'd at. My position, however, is clear from this passage. It is also clear, that the *English* translators thought so; *viz.* that *Saul* and his armour-bearer perished by the same sword.



ANOTHER circumstance relating to this battle, is, that the *Philistines* gained it, as I apprehend by the advantage of their archers. And my reasons for thinking so, are thus founded:

THERE is no mention of any archer in any of the *Philistine* armies or battles before this\*. And, in this battle, these are the persons that pressed so hard upon *Saul*: *And the archers hit him,* (says the text) *and he was sore wounded of the archers.* Now, what we render *wounded*, the best critics interpret *frighted*: which still confirms the opinion, that he killed himself through fear. It was a way of fighting for which he was not prepared, and therefore it threw him into a consternation.

IN the next place, after this battle, *David* had the *Israelites* taught the use of the bow: which, doubtless, he would have done much sooner, when he commanded the armies of *Saul* against the *Philistines*, had they then gained any advantage over the *Israelites* by means of these weapons.

Now these archers were, doubtless, of vast advantage to the *Philistines*, in their attack upon *Saul's* camp: 1<sup>st</sup>, because an assault with that kind of weapon was new and surprising; and all such are generally successful: and, 2<sup>dly</sup>, because the arrows beat off all that defended

\* It was not, indeed, unknown to them; for *Jonathan* is celebrated for his skill and dexterity in it; and so are some of the worthies who resorted to *David*: but it seems not to have been yet brought into common use.

the fences of the camp, and destroyed them at a distance, before they could come to a close fight; which might naturally throw them into terror and confusion.

SIR *Isaac Newton* tells us, that those mighty numbers of men, who aided the *Philistines* against *Saul*, in the beginning of his reign; were the shepherds expelled from *Egypt* by *Amasis*, some of whom fled into *Phœnicia*, and others into *Arabia Petrea*. Now his son *Ammon* conquered *Arabia*: Why then may we not fairly presume, that these archers, who now aided the *Philistines*, were either *Arabs*, who fled thither from *Ammon*, or those *Egyptians* who fled before to *Arabia*, and learnt arching there from the natives, who are allowed the best bowmen in the world? Since the time and circumstances suit, the conjecture will not, I believe, be thought ill-grounded.

IN the last place; if this attack upon *Saul's* camp was encouraged by the intelligence of *Saul's* having stolen out of the camp the evening before; then his applying to the *Pythonefs*, was the immediate cause of his destruction. And this gives light to that passage, 1 *Chron.* x. 13. and at the same time receives light from it, that *Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also for asking one, who had a familiar spirit, to inquire.*

## C H A P. XXVI.

*A short Essay upon the Character of*  
J O N A T H A N.

WHEN we meet with any person in history of a very extraordinary character, whose death is, as we think, untimely; and his fate, in appearance, unworthy of his virtue; instead of submitting with profound humility to the dispensations of Providence, and revering the unsearchable ways of infinite Wisdom, we find a kind of impulse upon the mind, to inquire into the occasions of it. And, if we are disappointed in our search, we are too much tempted to repine at the divine decisions, or, it may be, to impeach them; especially if the character be amiable and interesting, and such as we cannot help admiring and loving. This, I think, hath, in some measure, been the case of every commentator that hath considered the fate of *Jonathan*; and one of them, I find, hath considered him in the same light that *Virgil* does *Ripheus* :

---*Cadit & Ripheus, justissimus unus*  
*Qui fuit in Teucris, & servantissimus æqui.*  
*Dis aliter visum.*---

A man,



A man, in the estimation of the world, the justest of all the *Trojans*, but not so in the sight of the gods.

THERE are, indeed, few characters among men, more lovely, or more extraordinary, than that of *Jonathan*; fortitude, fidelity, magnanimity! a soul susceptible of the most refined friendship, and superior to all the temptations of ambition and vanity! and all these crowned with the most resigned submission to the will of GOD!

THESE are his distinguishing lineaments: but there is no such thing as perfection in man. A finished character were, as one of our *English* poets well expresses it,

*A faultless monster, which the world ne'er saw.*

Two things I find, *Jonathan* justly chargeable with in the Sacred History. The first is, A most grievous violation of all the laws of justice, nature, and nations, in smiting the *Philistine* garrison at *Geba*, in the midst of a profound peace: And the second, A great want of duty to his father, and a very indecent, disrespectful treatment of his character.

THE first of these will appear from the 13th and 14th verses of the viith chapter of the 1st book of *Samuel*, compared with the 3d and 4th verses of the xiiiith chapter.

THE second is not obscurely hinted in the xxth chapter of the 1st book of *Samuel*, at the 30th verse, where *Saul* calls him, *the son of perverse rebellion*; plainly intimating some obliquity in his behaviour, and restiveness to the

dictates of his duty in point of obedience. But as this is the charge of an enraged man, commanding something unreasonable, little stress can be laid upon it.

BUT this point is, I think, fully cleared from the ninth chapter of this book.

FOR, suppose it allowable in *Jonathan* to steal from the camp with his armour-bearer, and make an attempt upon the *Philistines*, without the leave of his father, and his general; which, I believe, the discipline of war will not admit: however, suppose him excuseable in this, from some heroic or divine impulse; What can excuse his disrespectful treatment of his father's character, upon hearing that *herem*, or *curse*, under which he had adjured the people to touch no food on that occasion? His father had a right, as a commander, to lay any temporary restraint upon his soldiers, which he thought might be for the public good, and under what penalty he pleased; and, as a king of *Israel*, he had a right to adjure them; that is, to lay them under the obligation of an oath to observe it. Did it then become his son to call an action of this kind, *a troubling the land*; and to charge it as the reason why his enemies were not more fully defeated? Was not such a speech as this enough to excite a sedition and rebellion in the army? Allow him to have incurred the *herem* through ignorance; Was that ignorance invincible? Or rather, Was it not the effect of his own transgression of duty? His conduct in this respect is surely less justifiable than that of *Hippolytus*:  
and

and yet it is the sense of antiquity, that he died in consequence of his being devoted to destruction by his father *Theseus*. Indeed, we are taught better: We know, that *the curse causeless shall not come*. But surely it is not easy to pronounce this curse on *Jonathan* causeless. At least, Did he not know himself included in the adjuration, and liable to the penalty that attended it? Did he humble himself under that knowledge? or make any apology or submission to his parents? And should he not have done so, under all the security of innocence? Or, if he thought invincible ignorance acquitted him of all guilt on that head; Did he think it could acquit him of the guilt of setting light by his parent, or the curse due to it? *Cursed is he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen (Deut. xxvii. 16).*

DIVINES content themselves on this head, by observing how providential it was, that *Jonathan* was taken off in this battle, to make way for *David*. But I could wish they had been more solicitous to acquit the Providence of GOD of that partiality, with which profane spirits are too apt to charge it, upon such occasions.

THE sum of all is this; The guilt of massacring the *Philistine* garrison is beyond all question. And though there were not oftentimes one inevitable event to the righteous and to the wicked; it is certain, that for this guilt *Jonathan* deserved to die. And, for my part, I cannot acquit him of the other. But though I



could acquit him of mortal guilt on this account; yet is there (at least) an indecency in this behaviour of his, which greatly distresses me.

THE reader will, perhaps, see it in a clearer light, if he compares it with the demeanour of the great *English* hero, the *Black Prince*, after the battle of *Cressi*. It is certain, that the battle of *Mitchmass* was, in a great measure, won by the fortunate bravery of *Jonathan*, as that of *Cressi* was by the steady and persevering valour of the *Black Prince*. *Jonathan* had now like to have lost his life, by his father's rash, but undesigning adjuration: The *Black Prince* was in little less danger of losing his, by his father's peremptory and deliberate refusal to send him any aid against his enemies\*, when hard beset by them. When the battle was over, *Jonathan* suffered himself to reprove the misconduct of his father: and young *Edward*, far from upbraiding or resenting, fell upon his knees, with all the marks of humiliation and affection, to his.

\* The king kept off from the engagement with a strong body of men: He hovered (says *Echard*) on the hill, like a tempest in a cloud, ready to discharge its fury, but at present only watching and observing this unequal conflict. Here a message was sent to him from the earl of *Northampton*, to desire him to come down and succour his son, now very hardly beset. Upon which he demanded, *Whether he was alive?* The messenger told him, *Yes; but was in danger of being overpowered by numbers.* Then (replied the king, with his usual courage) *let them know, that while my son is alive, they send for no assistance to me; for the honour of this glorious day shall be his.*

IT must, however, be owned, that from *David's* celebrating the harmony and union of this father and son, it is highly probable, that *Jonathan* sufficiently atoned for this one act of rashness, by a course of subsequent duty and piety to his parent. And such piety, to such a parent, will, I believe, be allowed to have had more than ordinary merit in it.

ALL that I have said, hath no other tendency, than to establish that noble question of the righteous and humble *Job*, *Shall mortal man be more just than God?*

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C H A P. XXVII.

*Objections answered ; and Reasons urged, to shew, that the Battle of Mount Gilboa was fought on the next Day after Saul's consulting the Pythoness.*

**B**UT we have still one objection more to struggle with; and that is, That the prediction relating to the event of this battle, is not so precise as we pretend; or, if it be, it was not true.

IT is not so precise: for the word *mahar*, which we interpret, *to-morrow*, sometimes signifies an indefinite distant time; and if it be strictly understood of to-morrow, it was not true; for the battle with the *Philistines* was not fought on the next day: for *Endor* (say they) probably

was one day's journey from *Gilboa*. *Saul* had eaten no meat all that day, and all that night: it is probable, he eat something before he left the camp; and therefore he was a whole day, and part of the night, in travelling thither from *Gilboa*: it must take him as much time to go back; consequently the battle could not be next day: and, besides all this, the camp was moved twice after this, before the day of battle.

To these objections I answer thus, in their order:

FIRST; It must be owned, that the word *mahar* does sometimes signify a future indefinite time; and I know no word that may not sometimes be taken figuratively: I am sure the word *to-morrow* is often taken so in *English*. But the primary, ordinary, obvious sense of it is strictly the next day after the time in which the speaker uses it; and it is evident from *Saul's* terror, that he so understood it here. For, had he thought these evils threatened only in some future, indefinitely distant time, they would not have made that impression upon him: and therefore if the person who said this, did not mean what *Saul* understood, he meant to deceive him; and I cannot believe it was *Samuel* that said it.

Now I am clearly of opinion, that the battle with the *Philistines* was strictly and literally fought on the next day; and I think there is nothing in the narration to contradict this supposition. And to evince this, I shall first shew the many great errors, and glaring mistakes, advanced



vanced on the other side, to support an idle hypothesis.

IN the first place, they suppose *Endor* to be a day's journey from *Gilboa*; and, lest *Saul* should not be long enough in travelling it, they suppose, that in that advanced age, and in those dangerous ways, he travelled on foot. Now, by all the best accounts, *Endor* is not at the distance of three hours from *Gilboa*. *Gilboa* is in *Iffachar*, on the confines of *Manasseh*, and *Endor* in *Manasseh*. The greatest part of *Manasseh* was now in the hands of the *Philistines*, and the rest was very narrow and little. *Salianus* says, that *Endor* was near *Shunem*: and Dr. *Patrick* tells us, that part of *Gilboa* was over-against *Endor*, and part over-against *Shunem*. And if so, we cannot well suppose it five miles distant. *Eusebius* fixes the right situation of it near *Scythopolis*, or *Beth-shan*, to the west of the river *Jordan*; but tells us, that in his time there was a great village of that name near mount *Tabor*. Which some commentators not attending to, imagine it was this village which *Saul* resorted to, and ground all their idle reasonings upon that mistake.

IN the next place: Is it likely, that *Saul* should leave his camp in the morning, and travel all the day, with only two servants, through a country environed by his enemies? for *Endor* was near *Shunem*, and not far from *Beth-shan*; and the *Philistines* were then at *Shunem*, and in possession of *Beth-shan*.

BUT he was fasting all that day; and it is probable he took food before he left the camp.

WITH

WITH great submission, the probability is altogether on the other side. Men in great trouble seldom think of eating, nor indeed can they eat.

Now what these men make the business of two days, might very easily be effected in one night. For, if we suppose *Endor* twice as far off as Dr. *Patrick* places it, a man, under a necessity of using expedition, might travel so far, and farther, stay three hours there, and return again in the compass of ten or twelve hours. So that, supposing *Saul* to have left his camp a little before or after sun-set, he might be back again early the next morning; and the battle might be fought that day, as I am well satisfied it was.

BUT it seems there were two encampments after this adventure at *Endor*.

So, indeed, it is asserted; but why, I cannot conceive. For my own part, I never could find the least foundation for such an opinion, besides a very careless perusal of the history.

THE case is this: When two things are transacted about the same time, both these, and the circumstances of both, cannot be related at the same time; and therefore one of them must be told by way of anticipation.

IT is said, that *Saul's* battle with the *Philistines* was on the same day with *David's* slaughter of the *Amalekites*. This is a great mistake\*: however, let it, for the present, be supposed.

\* For, at that rate, the *Amalekite* must have been six days in bringing the news of it: which is a very absurd supposition.

THERE was an incident of great importance previous to that battle, with which the reader should be acquainted. The author interrupts his relation of *David's* adventure, to acquaint us with this incident; and, in order to inform us the better, he tells us the situation of both armies at the time of this incident, and then resumes the thread of *David's* history.

HE first tells us, (*chap. xxviii. ver. 1, 2.*) that the *Philistines* gathered their armies together: *David* was there amongst the rest: *Achish* told him, He must go to battle with him; and *David* consented. Here the author leaves *David*, and passes on to the incident of *Endor*, which happened some time after; that when he resumed the thread of *David's* story, he might do it without interruption. Now, in order to give Us a clear idea of the adventure at *Endor*, he tells us the situation in which both armies were at that time; *Saul* in *Gilboa*, and the *Philistines* at *Shunem*. Now some critics, not attending to this, imagine that *Saul* was at *Gilboa*, and the *Philistines* at *Shunem*, when *Achish* told *David*, that he must go to battle with him: whereas it evidently appears from the subsequent relation, that *Achish* was then at, or going to *Aphek*; and *Gilboa* was, to a demonstration, the last encampment of the *Israelites* (for there the battle was fought, and there it is expressly said the camp then was); and consequently, *Shunem* the last of the *Philistines*. For *David* was dismiss'd upon the first review at *Aphek*, *ch. xxix.* And when the *Philistines* were at *Aphek*, the

5

*Israelites*



*Israelites* were at *Jezreel*, that is, *Gilboa*, (2 *Sam.* iv. 4.) whither the *Philistines* bent their course in quest of them the very day that *David* was forced to return to *Ziklag*. So that it was impossible *David* could be with the *Philistines* at *Skunem*, in sight of the *Israelite* army, when they were at *Gilboa*. The *Philistines* did not suffer him to march one inch with them after the day of the first review.

LET us now consider the other way of reasoning?—*Saul* (say they) went to *Endor* the night before *David* went to *Ziklag*. How gross a mistake is this! *Saul* had not yet so much as seen the *Philistine* army, unless he could see them at a distance of seventy miles. For the *Philistines* (as I now observed), were then at *Aphek*, and he at *Jezreel*; and *Aphek* (as I shall soon shew) was at least seventy miles from *Jezreel*.

Now I find no mention of more than two *Apheks* in Scripture; one in *Judah*, and the other in *Manasseh*. Dr. *Patrick* thinks there was a third in *Asher*; which is the *Aphek* meant here; and with some appearance of reason: because it is more probable, that the *Philistines* should assemble and review their forces upon their own borders, to which *Asher* was more central and contiguous, than that they should defer such a review, until they came into the heart of *Saul's* country; and go so far out of their way, that is from the centre of their own country, to make it. Now, supposing this the case, the nearest part of *Asher* is at least two  
good

Good days march from *Jezreel*; and therefore the *Philistines* were at least two days march from *Saul*, when *David* left them.

BUT it will appear, from a way of reasoning intelligible to every man of common understanding, that the *Aphek* here mentioned must be nearer to *Ziklag*, and farther from *Jezreel*.

THE city of *Ziklag* was, in the first distribution of the country, given to the tribe of *Judah*; and, in the second, to that of *Simeon*: from whence it plainly appears, that it was situate in the confines of those two tribes. Now from *Gilboa* to the nearest part of *Simeon* is more than 110 geometric miles in a direct line, without allowing for the winding of roads (and, with that allowance, at least 120). And for the truth of this, I appeal to every man that can handle a scale and compass. If then *Aphek*, where *David* left the *Philistines*, was, as our adversaries suppose, in the valley of *Jezreel*, at the foot of *Gilboa*; then *David* marched at least 120 miles in the space of two days and an half; for he returned from thence to *Ziklag* early enough on the third day to pursue the *Amalekites*, who were a considerable way off, and overtook them that very night.

Now I am assured by military men, that twenty miles a day on foot is great marching, even for men every way appointed and fitted for expedition; and, consequently, that *Aphek* we speak of cannot be presumed to have been more than fifty miles from *Ziklag*.

Now

Now if *David*, with his light band of active and expeditious rovers, cannot well be presumed to have marched more than fifty miles in two days and an half, *Achish* with his whole army cannot, I believe, be supposed to have completed the rest of the way to *Jezreel* [70 miles] in less than five days (at least, so I am assured by an eminent and experienced captain). And if their armies did not consist of horse, chariots, and light-armed archers, who might, on occasion, be taken up by the chariots, or behind the horsemen; five days, in so hot a climate, were, perhaps, too small an allowance for such a march. And, surely, we must allow them one day's rest, after so long a march, before the battle. It is madness to imagine, that *Achish* should, with a weary army, and without being under a necessity, attempt upon *Saul* so advantageously encamped. Nor will it, I believe, be thought unreasonable, to allow *Saul* one day to survey the strength and number of his adversaries, and at least one more to apply to GOD in the several ways of *Urim*, prophets, and dreams\*, before his fears carried him to *Endor*. Then will it be on the eve of the eighth day from *David's* departure, at soonest, that *Saul* consulted the *Pythonefs*; and there is not the least reason to doubt, that the battle was fought the very next day after. And the *Amalekite*, who fled from

\* If we allow the first night for applying to God by dreams, we cannot allow less than the next day for applying by prophets and *Urim*.



thence that day towards night, might reach *David* at *Ziklag* on the third day, inclusive, from the battle; that is, on the third day, inclusive, from *David's* last return to *Ziklag*. If then we suppose him and his army to have rested one day, after all this fatigue, before their return, and to have spent three days in their return\* (which, considering their own fatigue, and that of the women, children, flocks and herds, which came along with them, will not, I believe, be deemed unreasonable); then will *David's* second arrival at *Ziklag* be on the eighth day after his departure from the *Philistines*; that is, on the very day on which *Josephus* assures us the battle with the *Philistines* was fought: for it was fought (as he tells us) on the day of *David's* return to *Ziklag* from the slaughter of the *Amalekites*; and his authority is of weight enough in this point, because such a tradition might easily be transmitted with truth.

THIS, I hope, will be deemed a fair and rational account of the matter; I am sure, it is a candid one.

BUT still it is objected; That supposing this to be the case, as I have stated it, yet still this personator of *Samuel* falsifies: because he says in one place, that *Saul* and his sons should be *with him*, i. e. among the dead, *to-morrow*; and in another, *The Lord hath done this thing*

\* As the *Amalekites* spent three days in their march from *Ziklag*, to the place where *David* overtook them.

*unto thee this day.* Now one of these assertions must be false, even though we suppose this spoken in the prophetic style; which, to imply the certainty of the prediction, speaks of things to come as already past; for *Saul* and his sons could not be killed this day, and to-morrow too.

ANSWER; That both assertions were perfectly consistent, and strictly true.

THE *Jewish* day began at six o'clock in the evening; and therefore, whatever was to come to pass on the ensuing day, (*i. e.* light) was, in propriety of common speech, to happen to-morrow; and yet at the same time might, in a true, a proper, and a philosophic sense, be said to come to pass on this very day.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

*David receives an Account of Saul and Jonathan's Death. His Lamentation upon that Head.*

THE third day after *David's* return to *Ziklag* from the slaughter of the *Amalekites* a young man arrived from *Saul's* camp\* with all the marks of ill news upon him; his cloaths rent, and earth upon his head: and when he

\* In the *Hebrew* it is, *from the camp, from with Saul.* This plainly shews, that the battle was in the camp.

came before *David*, he fell down to the earth, and did obeisance. *David* was struck with the sight, and asked him, with great eagerness, Whither and whence he came? He answered, That he had escaped from the camp of *Israel*. And when *David* earnestly inquired, How matters went there? he replied, That the army was put to flight, with a great slaughter; and that *Saul* and *Jonathan* fell among the rest. *David* then inquired the certainty of the account, How he knew, that *Saul* and *Jonathan* were dead? The young man told him, That as he happened by chance\* upon mount *Gilboa*, he saw *Saul* leaning upon his spear, and the chariots † and horsemen following hard after him; that the king called to him, and asked him, Who he was? And, being answered, That he was an *Amalekite*, begged him to stand upon him, and kill him ‡, being in great distress, because his life was yet whole in him; and that he did as the king commanded, being very sure, that he could not recover of the wounds he had already received. And, to confirm his relation, he pre-

\* There always are a great number of strollers that follow camps, and this lad, probably, was one of them. Their business is pillage, and stripping the dead. This lad, it seems, knew his business, and got the start of the *Philistines* in the pillage of *Saul*.

† This *Amalekite* was as great a liar as *Sinon*; but, it seems, not altogether so dextrous. Whether an account of chariots pursuing upon a mountain hath an air of probability, military men will best determine.

‡ *Saul*, in the true history, was afraid of being slain by the uncircumcised: And how was the matter mended, by desiring to die by the hand of an *Amalekite*?



presented *David* with *Saul's* crown\* and bracelet, which he himself had taken from him. Then *David*, and all that were about him, rent their cloaths, and mourned, and wept, and fasted all that day for *Saul*, and *Jonathan his son*, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

AFTER this, *David* called again for the messenger of these evil tidings, and examined, Who he was? and, being again informed, that he was an *Amalekite*, asked him, How he dared to stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed? And immediately crying out, *Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed;* he called to one of his attendants, and commanded him to fall upon and kill him. He instantly obeyed, and dispatched the self-convicted wretch, doubly devoted to destruction; who, after all, died for a crime which he had not committed; yet well deserved to die, for taking the guilt of it upon him. *David* rightly judged, that *Saul* had no power over his own life; and, consequently, should not have been obeyed in such a command: GOD and the state had as much right to his life, when he was weary of it, as when he

\* Possibly the serious reader may not think it an observation altogether unworthy of his regard, that an *Amalekite* now took the crown from *Saul's* head, which he had forfeited by his disobedience in relation to *Amalek*.

most loved it. And, besides all this, it behoved *David* to vindicate his own innocence to the world, by so public an execution: he might otherwise, perhaps, have been branded with the guilt of employing that wretch to murder his persecutor.

BESIDES this, *David*, doubtless, had it in view to deter others by this example. He consulted his own safety in this; as *Cæsar* is said, by restoring the statues of *Pompey*, to have fixed his own. This was a wise lecture to princes; and many of them have, I believe, profited by it: as *Vitellius*, we are told, put all those to death, who vaunted any merit in the death of *Galba*; not in honour of *Galba*, (as *Tacitus* observes) but from the prospect of present security, and future vengeance.

AFTER the first shock of *David's* distress for *Jonathan* was over, he poured out his complaints, in that noble strain of poetry which was so natural to him, and which, I think, hath shamed all that have ever followed him upon that subject.

I NEVER yet saw justice done to it in any version; and shall attempt to present my reader with no more than a plain prose translation of it, taken almost verbatim from the *English Bible*; except in one instance, wherein, as I apprehend, the present reading may be wrong: I submit to better judges:

“ O BEAUTY of *Israel*, stabbed in thy high  
 “ places! How are the mighty fallen! Tell it  
 “ not in *Gath*:—publish it not in the streets

“ of *A. kalon*,—left the daughters of the *Philistines* rejoice,—left the daughters of the  
 “ uncircumcised triumph.

“ MOUNTAINS of *Gilboa*, nor dew, nor  
 “ rain upon you, nor fields of waved offerings!  
 “ For there the shield of the brave was cast away,  
 “ —the shield of *Saul*,—the weapons of the  
 “ anointed with oil.

“ FROM the blood of the slain, from the  
 “ fat\* of the valiant, the bow of *Jonathan*  
 “ turned not back †, and the sword of *Saul*  
 “ returned not empty.

“ SAUL and *Jonathan* were lovely and pleasant  
 “ in their lives; and in their deaths they  
 “ were not divided.

“ THEY were swift before eagles, strong before ‡ lions.

“ DAUGHTERS of *Israel*, weep over *Saul*;  
 “ who cloathed you in scarlet with delights,  
 “ who put on ornaments of gold upon your  
 “ apparel.

“ How are the mighty fallen in the midst of  
 “ the battle!

\* The *Hebrew* word *heleb* signifies in this place, as I apprehend, the inward fat, such as was burnt on the altar. So it signifies *Numb. xviii. 17.*

† The literal construction I take to be this: The bow of *Jonathan* was not bent without the blood of the slain, &c. i. e. every arrow from it was winged with death.

An *English* poet, I imagine, would be apt to translate it in this manner, or something like it, in a better style:

*To vital blood, and fat of bravest foes,  
 The shafts of Jonathan unerring flew.*

‡ *Id est*, compared, or rather, preferably, to them.



“ OH! *Jonathan*, stabbed in thy high places!  
 “ I am distressed for thee, my brother *Jonathan*.  
 “ Very delightful hast thou been to me : Thy  
 “ love to me was wonderful, passing the love  
 “ of women. How are the mighty fallen, and  
 “ the weapons of war perished !”

THE bursts of sorrow in this poem are so strong, so sudden, so pathetic ! so short, so various, so unconnected ! no grief ever was painted in such living and lasting colours ! And it is one sure sign and beautiful effect of it, that *David's* heart was so softened and melted by it, as to lose all traces of *Saul's* cruelty to him. He remembered nothing in him now, but the brave man, the valiant leader, the magnificent prince, the king of GOD's appointment, his own once indulgent master, his *Michal's* and his *Jonathan's* father.—But to be more particular :

As *Jonathan's* death touched him nearest, it was natural he should be the first object of his lamentation :—*Beauty* (or *glory*) of *Israel*, *pierced in thy high places*.—And, to put it out of all doubt, that *Jonathan* is here meant, he varies it in a subsequent verse :—*Jonathan, slain in thy high places*.

*HOW* are the mighty fallen ! &c. How untimely and lamentably *Jonathan* ! and how sadly and shamefully *Saul* by his own hand ! This death, as it was matter of just reproach upon *Saul*, he knew would be matter of more triumph with the enemy. He could not bear the thoughts of this infamy to his country, and his king ; and therefore he breaks out into that

beautiful apostrophe:—*Tell it not in Gath!*  
*&c.*

*THE mountains of Gilboa, &c.* Throwing away the shield, was matter of the highest reproach in all the accounts of antiquity. And this, in the practice of so brave a prince as *Saul*, was an example of terrible consequence; and therefore must not go unreproved, especially in a song which soldiers were to learn. *David* could not censure *Saul*; he was his prince, and his enemy: the infamy, however, must fall somewhere;—let the place it happened in, be accursed.—Poetry justifies this: and I will not scruple to say, It is the most masterly stroke the science will admit. The rage and indignation expressed in the original line, *Al tal veal matar yalechem*, is to me inimitable; and the omission of all the auxiliary verbs is a sufficient indication of it. And the second succeeding line is little inferior to it;—*Ki sam niggal magen gibborim*.

AND here I cannot but observe with what inimitable address *David* hath conducted this reproach. For, at the same time that the mountains are cursed for it, he hath contrived to turn it into praise upon *Saul*:—*There the shield of the mighty was cast away*.—No hint by whom.

*SAUL and Jonathan were lovely, &c.* This sweetness and harmony of their lives is, I think, inimitably expressed in the measure:

*Hannehabim*

*Vebannehimim behajehem—*

The cadence is the same in all; and the worst ear will find a chiming in them, wonderfully expressive of harmony.

As nobody, that I know of, hath attempted to shew the measure of this ode, I hope I shall be indulged in a plain unpretending conjecture concerning it.

IN the first place, then; Whoever considers it, will find it plainly divided into six distinct parts, or heads, of complaint and lamentation. These parts I take to be so many stanzas; like the strophe, antistrophe, and epode of *Pindar*. And if so, then the beginnings of six of the verses are plainly pointed out to us.

EVERY sentence I take to be a verse; because real grief is short and sententious. And, to me, many of these verses plainly demonstrate their own beginnings and endings, without the aid either of unnatural elisions, or those monstrous and ridiculous mutilations and divisions of words, with which critics have, to such simple eyes as mine, defaced some of the best odes of *Pindar*, and turned some of his finest verses into downright burlesque; confining him to their fantastic measures, who scorned to be confined to any but those of his own free ear.

THAT noble exclamation, *How are the mighty fallen!* with which three stanzas are marked, I take to be the simple dictate of sorrow upon every topic of lamentation; and is therefore, I think, to be considered as a kind of burden to the song, and to be either inserted in



each stanza, as in the first ; or added to it, as in the two last.

AND as the author did not take the trouble of transcribing it in every stanza, (as no writer does at this day) I apprehend it to be transmitted to us, under the disadvantage of that omission, just as it was left in the author's copy :— which, by the way, is no bad proof of the transcriber's fidelity.

IF these principles be right, then, I think, the measures are as follow. If I am mistaken, I shall be very glad to see my errors amended.

1.	1.
הצבי ישראל על במותיך הלל איך נפלו גבורים אל תגידו בגרז אל תבשרו בחוצת אשקלון פן תשמחנה בנות פלשתים פן תעלונה בנות הערלים	Hatsbi Israel yal bemotheca halal ech naphelu gibborim al tagidhu begath al tebassèru behutsoth Askelon pen tismahenah benoth Pelistim pen taylozenah benoth hayrelim,
2.	2.
הרו בגלבע אל טל ואל מטר עליכם ושדי תרומות כי שם נגעל מגן גבורים מגן שאול כלי משיח בשמן	hare begilboa al tal veal matar yalechem ufede terumoth ki sam nigyal magen gibborim magen Sàul chele masiah basamen.
3.	3
מדם הללים מחלב גבורים קשת יהנתן לא נסוג אהור והרב שאול לא תשוב ריקם	middam hallalim meheleb gibborim kefeth Jehonathan lo nasug ahor vehereb Sàul lo tafub rekam.
4.	4
שאול ויהנתן הנאהבים והנעימים בחינם	Sàul vihcnathan hanneahabim vehanneyimim behajehem

ובמותם לא נפרדו	ubemotham lo niphradu *
כנשרים קלו	minefferim kallu
נארוות גברו	mearaioth gaberu.

5.

בנות ישראל	benoth Israel
אל שאול בכינה	el Saül bechenah
המלכשכם שנו	hammalbifchem shani
עם ערנים המעלה	Yim Yadanim hammayaleh
עדי זהב על לבושכן	Yadi zeheb yal lebuschen
איך נפלו גבורים	ech naphelu gibborim
בתוך המלחמה	bethoc hammilhamah.

5.

6.

— יחונתן	Abi Jehonathan
אל כמותך הלל	yal bemotheca halal
צר לי עליה	tzar li yaleha
אחי יחונתן	ahi Jehonathan
נעמת לי מאד	nayamta li meod
נפלאתה אהבתך לי	niphleatha ahabatheca li
מאהבת נשים	meahabath nashim
איך נפלו גבורים	ech naphelu gibborim
ייאבדו כלי מלחמה	vajobedu chele milhamah.

6.

\* *And in their death they were not divided.*

STANZA 4. *Ver. 4.* This is said in the true spirit of friendship, and in one of its finest distresses: He felicitates them upon that happy circumstance of their friendship; to be undivided in death; and, in so doing, finely laments himself upon that head.

VER. 5, 6. The rapidity of the first line, and the strength and majesty of the second, are strong instances on which to ground that fine poetic precept:

*The sound should be an echo to the sense.*

STANZA 6. His grief, as it began with *Jonathan*, naturally ends with it. It is well known that we lament ourselves in the loss of  
our

our friends; and *David* was no way solicitous to conceal this circumstance.

IT may be the work of fancy: but to me, I own, this last stanza is the strongest picture of grief I ever perused. To my ear, every line in it is either swelled with sighs or broken with sobs. The judicious reader will plainly find a break in the first line; very probably so left in the original, the writer not being able to find an epithet for *Jonathan* answering to the idea of his distress. I have ventured to supply it in the *English* character, I think not unnaturally; I will not presume to say, justly.

To conclude: Few have ever perused this lamentation with so little attention, as not to perceive it evidently animated with a spirit truly martial and magnanimous! It is the lamentation of a brave man over brave men! It is, in one word, a lamentation equally pathetic and heroic!

*E N D of Book I.*



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AN  
HISTORICAL ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
LIFE *and* REIGN  
OF  
*DAVID*, KING of *ISRAEL*.  
BOOK II.

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A N

## Historical ACCOUNT

Of the LIFE and REIGN of

King *D A V I D*.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**H**ITHERTO the life of *David* hath led the reader through a great variety of surprising scenes, and interesting events; events the more interesting, because many of them were such as are incident to every man alive: inasmuch as all men are within the reach of malice; and very few placed beyond the reach of power and oppression. We have seen an obscure young man signally distinguished by the favours of Heaven, and made the instrument of deliverance to a distressed people; and, in that deliverance, a signal instance of humility, and trust in the Divine Providence, triumphing over pride



pride and self-sufficiency. We have seen this obscure youth become, by his virtues, an object of envy to a great monarch; and that monarch, with the advantage of a noble person, and excellent endowments, deformed by that single vice, beyond expression; made odious even to his own family, and led insensibly into the most hateful and cruel enormities; drawn, by degrees, from the fear and love of God, whose favour and protection he had so signally experienced, and driven into the extremities of superstition; and, in consequence of both these, drawing down the just judgments of God upon his own head, and involving his family in his ruin. O would princes be warned, by this example, to take care how they provoke that great Being by whom they reign! how they allow themselves in any one habitual violation of his commands!

ON the other hand, let the fortune, the successes, the deliverances of this obscure youth, (resting himself wholly upon the protection and providence of God, and humbly submitting to his dispensations, and in the end crowned with success) be, to all mankind, a lecture of humility, and intire resignation to the great Arbiter of the world; who with equal ease, *pour-eth contempt upon princes, and exalteth the lowly and meek.* By what means and measures this was effected, in the case of *David*, shall be the business of the next book to explain. In the course of which, the reader, of less attention, may, I hope, find some amusement; the  
 serious,

serious, something more than entertainment; and the truly religious, solid satisfaction. *Major rerum nunc nascitur ordo.* A series of greater scenes now opens to our view; attended with greater objections to the character of *David*, and more difficulty to remove them: all which naturally send a thinking writer to the *Father of lights*, and *Fountain of wisdom*, for aid and direction in so great an undertaking. —

*Thou therefore—O SPIRIT, that dost prefer,  
Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me; for thou know'st. —*

*—What in me is dark,—*

*Illumine; what is low, raise and support:  
That, to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God with men.*

## C H A P. I.

*DAVID goes to Hebron, and is elected  
King by the Tribe of Judah.*

**W**HEN *David* had given a due time to his grief for *Jonathan*, and mourning for *Saul*, he then applied himself to that God, who had appointed him to the kingdom, to know when and by what means he should best be put in possession of it: and, being directed by God to go up to *Hebron*, a city of *Judah*,  
he

he went thither, with his two wives, (*Abinoam* and *Abigail*) and whole household; as did all his followers with theirs; and dwelt in that and the adjacent cities.

HEBRON was situate in the midst of the tribe of *Judah*, on the top of a ridge of high mountains, equally famed for fruits, herbage, and honey: Mr. *Sandys* seems to have surveyed the whole region round it, with uncommon rapture; and the very learned and accurate Dr. *Shaw* hath considered it with singular care and attention: He observes of that region, that it is admirably fitted for olives and vineyards, and, in many parts, for grain and pasture; and consequently, for the continuance of that blessing upon *Judah* in his lot, *his eye shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.* We may judge of the value of this mountain, when we reflect, that it was given to *Caleb* as a peculiar favour and reward of his fidelity to God, (*Jos.* xiv. 13, and 14.) and of its fruitfulness, by the numbers it supported; for it was a principal part of that mountainous region of *Judah*, which, in the reign of *Jehoshaphat*, mustered *seven hundred and fourscore thousand mighty men of valour*, 2 *Chron.* chap. xvii. ver. 14, 15, and 16.

THIS then seems to be a region peculiarly fitted for the reception of *David* and his men, with less inconvenience to the country: for there they might then dwell (as Dr. *Shaw* tells us the inhabitants do now) in greater numbers, and with greater advantages: for here (saith he,



p. 368.) they themselves *have bread to the full, whilst their cattle browse upon a richer herbage, and both of them are refreshed by springs of excellent water, &c.*

BESIDES this, *Hebron* had also other advantages; it was a *Levitical*, priestly, and patriarchal city; venerable for the sepulchres of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and, as tradition adds, of *Adam* also\*; and upon all these accounts long reputed, as it is at this day, even by the *Turks*, holy †; and honoured with the title of the *chosen*, or *beloved*. GOD had before appointed it for the residence of his favourite servants: and it was now peculiarly fitted for the reception of *David*; as being the metropolis of his tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who favoured his interest, as their duty to GOD required they should. His anointment to the regal office by *Samuel* had long since ceased to be a secret; and GOD's late more immediate designation of him to it, declared by the mouth of the same prophet at *Endor*, was doubtless by this time sufficiently known; and the determination of the metropolis in his favour would naturally be of great weight to influence the whole tribe, Nor were other in-

\* It was confessedly one of the most antient cities in the world. *Moses* tells us, (doubtless with a view of refuting the fabulous antiquity of the *Egyptians*) that it was built seven years before *Zoan* in *Egypt* (*Numb.* xiii. 22.) which was the capital of *Pharaoh*, at that time; for there *Moses* wrought his miracles, *Psal.* lxxviii. 12.

† *Helena*, the mother of *Constantine* the great, built here a goodly temple, over the cave of *Mecheleah*, now converted to a mosque, and the cave continually lighted with lamps.

duancements wanting, to engage them to concur in the same resolution. It was natural for them to prefer one of their own family; *Jacob* had long since predicted the establishment of the sovereignty in the tribe of *Judah*; *David* was of that tribe, beyond all dispute elected, and appointed to succeed *Saul*; and what had they to do, but to concur with the predeterminations of Providence in his favour? And accordingly we find, that he was quickly elected to the sovereignty of that tribe: *and the men of Judah (saith the text) came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah, 2 Sam. ii. 4.* Whether they did this with more dispatch, to influence the determinations of the other tribes in his favour, or whether it was delayed, until their dispositions were founded upon the point, is no-where said. This is certain, that one tribe's acting separate, and independent of the rest, was of dangerous example; nor could any thing but the divine authority justify it: and therefore it is not probable, that this step was taken, until all other expedients for an unanimous election failed. And here began the division of the kingdom, so lately predicted by *Samuel*.

WHILST *David* continued at *Hebron*, there was a continual resort of people to him from all the tribes, who gradually fell off from the house of *Saul*, and owned him for their sovereign; amounting in the whole (but we may presume not until the death of *Ishbosheth*, his competitor) to three hundred forty-eight thousand

thousand eight hundred armed men. *At that time* (saith the text, 1 Chron. xii. 22, &c.) *day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.* And as the order in which they came is set down, we find those of *Judah*, as it was natural, first; those of *Simeon* next (for their inheritance, we are told, *was within the inheritance of the children of Judah* \*); the *Levites* and *Aaronites* after them; then came a detachment from the house of *Benjamin*, (which bordered immediately upon *Judah*) but in a smaller number (three thousand only); *for as yet the multitude of them*, saith the text, (that is, the greatest number) *kept the ward of the house of Saul.* However, so considerable a desertion from that tribe seems to have greatly encouraged all the rest; for those that followed, came in in vastly greater numbers.

THE first account we hear of *David* after the election of his tribe, is his kind message to the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, for their heroic humanity, in rescuing and burying the bodies of *Saul* and his sons, which the *Philistines* had fastened to the walls of *Bethshan*. The men of *Jabesh* could not forget the great deliverance which *Saul* had wrought for them, in the beginning of his reign, when he rescued them from the cruelty of *Nakash* the *Ammonite* (1 Sam. ii.); and therefore they now thought themselves bound in gratitude to rescue him and his sons,

\* *Josh.* xix.



as far as in them lay, from the indignities they endured from the hands of the *Philistines*. *The valiant men arose* (saith the text, 1 *Sam.* xxxi. 12, 13.) *and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt\* them there; and they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.* They travelled at least ten miles by night, through a rough country, in the possession of their enemies, passed the *Jordan*, and took these bodies from the walls (from within the town †) of a powerful and hostile city; and returned the same night, burnt and buried their remains, and mourned seven days for them, fasting every day until night.

THIS heroic instance of gratitude and humanity, *David* thought himself obliged to recognize in a distinguished manner; and therefore, as soon as he heard it, he sent messengers to congratulate them upon it, with prayers for the divine blessing in requital of their gratitude and affection to their sovereign; and an assurance, that he also would requite them: notifying at the same time his advancement to the throne, by *Judah*; and exhorting them to shew themselves sons of valour, *although their master SAUL was dead*; intimating that he, being now invested with the regal office, was ready to protect them, as *Saul* had done; perhaps too insau-

\* As the custom was in case of a plague, *Amos* vi. 10. probably because they were now in an infectious state,

† 2 *Sam.* xxi. 12, from the street of Beth-shan.

ating, that true fortitude required them to assert the cause of justice, and leaving them to judge whose that was.

WHAT effect this message had upon them, we know not; yet I think we may fairly conjecture it had a good deal; since we find, that, upon this half tribe's joining with *Reuben* and *Gad* to come over to *David*, they made up together a body of an hundred and twenty thousand men.

## C H A P. II.

*Abner asserts Ishbosheth's Claim to the Crown. The Battle of Gibeon.*

ONE of *Saul's* sons yet survived, whose name was *Ishbosheth*, who, being in all probability less martial than the rest, went not to the war; though now advanced to the age of ambition, and not passed the ardour of youth, having reached his fortieth year, at the time of his father's death\*. A man of this character would in all probability have easily resigned his claim to the crown, and submitted to *David*, had he not been asserted and supported by the power of *Abner*, the son of *Ner*, *Saul's* general, and near kinsman; whose interest and ambition (and, it may be, his envy also) strongly swayed him against his duty. For it appears sufficiently

\* This shews him to have been born in the first year of *Saul's* reign, who reigned forty years. *Acts* xiii. 21.

from the sequel of his history, that he was well acquainted with *David's* divine designation to the throne; but, should he now submit to it, he must no more hope for the supreme command of the army. *Joab* was in possession of that (though not formally vested with it) under *David*; and well deserved to be so: and it was not probable he would displace him, a tried friend, and a near kinsman, to make way for an inveterate enemy, newly reconciled.

NOR was this all: *Ishboseth* was *Abner's* near kinsman; whom if he did not support, the interest of his tribe, and of his family, must fall with his own.

ADD to all this, that *Abner* commanded under *Saul* in all the expeditions he made against *David*: and it appears sufficiently from the history, that *David* was greatly an overmatch for him, in all military conduct and skill: nay more, I think, it appears, from the adventure of the camp, when *David* had both the king and the general in his power, that he upbraids *Abner* with pretending to more merit from his military skill, than he was justly intitled to.—*Art not thou* (*Abner*) *a valiant man*, (saith he\*) *and who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king?* Reproaches of this kind are not easily forgiven in rivals; especially in rivals successful and superior.

\* 1 Sam. xxvi. 15.



THESE then are the difficulties that seem to have obstructed *Abner's* submission to *David*; envy, ambition, interest, and personal pique. And nothing is more difficult, than a steady pursuit of duty with so many obstructions in the way: and therefore, whilst *David* was soliciting his interest with *Judah*, *Abner* solicited that of *Ishbosheth* with the rest of the tribes.

HIS first care was to move the compassion of the army in his favour: and, to this end, he carried him about through the camps, as the vulgate, *Grotius*, and *St. Jerom*, translate the expression; and then gained the tribes gradually to his interest: but the *English* translators, by the word *mahanaim*, (whose literal translation is *camps*) understand the city of that name, in the tribes of *Gad*, beyond *Jordan*; and the sequel of the history sufficiently justifies that translation. Here *Ishbosheth* fixed his residence: and the first part of the country gained to his interest, is said to be that of *Gilead*, in the half-tribe of *Manasseh*, on the other side *Jordan* also, and contiguous to *Gad*; where *Ishbosheth* could reside with more safety out of the reach of *David*, and the *Philistine* incursions. *Abner* then proceeded to *Ashur*, and so on gradually through the rest of the tribes, until he came to *Benjamin*; and fixed his residence in *Gibeon*, formerly the metropolis of the *Gibonites*, and made, after the league with them, a *Levitical* city.

FROM *Abner's* fixing his residence with his forces in this place, I think we may fairly infer,

that it was now possessed by men in whom he could confide; and consequently, not by *Gibeonites*, the mortal enemies to his house. And if not by *Gibeonites*, it could of right be only inhabited by *Levites*, because it was a *Levitical* city, although in the tribe of *Benjamin*. And how *Ishbosheth* could gain such confidence with the descendants of *Levi*, whose brethren his father massacred, is not easy to conceive; unless these were *Levites* put in possession of that city, when *Saul* extirpated the *Gibeonites*, in his zeal for the children of *Israel*. But I think it much more probable that they were friends of his own, whom he placed there by violence and wrong: as GOD had predicted of him by *Samuel*, I Sam. viii. 14. *And he will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, the best of them, and give them to his servants.*

How long *Abner* resided here, we cannot say; probably for the two first years of *Ishbosheth's* reign: for so long *David* and he seem to have lived quiet, without any act of hostility on either side; each in the mean time (doubtless) extending and strengthening his interest, the best he could.

HITHERTO *David* seems carefully to have avoided all acts of hostility, and determined not to begin them; waiting patiently for the divine disposal of affairs in his favour. But when he found, that *Abner* had drawn together a body of men at *Gibeon*, he thought it advisable to  
send

send some forces under *Joab* \*, to observe and attend them. They came in sight of one another, near the pool of *Gibeon*; *Abner* on one side of the pool, and *Joab* on the other; and there they sat down quietly, on each side, for some time; until *Abner*, in the wantonness of military cruelty, made a motion, that twelve young men of each party should rise up and *play* † before them, as he called it. One would expect, from this expression, to hear of a combat between men dextrous in the use of their arms, and the science of defence; such as was seen in the gladiatorial shews at *Rome* (which they also called plays). But it was quite otherwise; they rushed on one another, like so many ruffians; each seized his antagonist's beard ‡, or hair; and plunged his sword into his body; and *they fell down together*.

THIS conflict was the prelude to a fierce and general engagement, which immediately followed; in which *Abner* was put to flight, with the loss of three hundred and threescore men on his side, and but nineteen on the side of *Joab*,

\* With his two brothers *Abishai* and *Asabel*, all three sons of *Zeruiab*, *David's* sister.

† I have heard it remark'd by an accurate observer of nature, that almost all the plays of all animals have a resemblance of fighting: and soldiers, who sport with death, seem to consider fighting but as a rougher kind of play.

‡ *Plutarch* tells us in his apophthegms, that, all things being prepared for the fight, *Alexander's* captains asked him, Whether he had any thing else to command them? *Nothing*, says he, *but that the Macedonians shave their beards*. *Parmenio* wondering what he meant, *Don't you know*, says *Alexander*, *that there is no better bold in fight than the beard?*



besides his brother *Asahel*. A loss to him irreparable, and unspeakable! He was a gallant man, and one of *David's* twelve captains; remarkably valiant, but more remarkably swift, *light of foot* (saith the text) *as a roe in the field*. *Asahel* unfortunately singled out *Abner* in his flight, and pursued him personally; but his ambition to take his spoils, pushed him upon his fate. *Abner* did all he could to dissuade him from his design; pressed him more than once, to turn aside from him; *Turn thee aside to the right-hand, or to the left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take his armour; but Asahel would not.*—He pressed him again, by the friendship he had for his brother, to turn from him; and, when that would not do, he stabbed him with the hinder part of his spear, and slew him upon the place.

CICERO finely observes of civil wars, that all things are miserable in them, but victory most of all.

JOAB and *Abishai* continued the pursuit, probably without knowing the fate of their brother *Asahel*, as we may conjecture from their subsequent moderation.

WHEN *Joab* came up with *Abner*, who had by this time drawn up his forces on the top of an hill, *Abner* immediately began a parly with him; cautioned him from carrying things to an extremity; and put him in mind, that they were his brethren, whom he thus pursued to death. The force and beauty of the original is inimitable? *Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou?*

*thou not, that it will be bitterness in the latter end? &c.* These questions carried conviction with them; *Joab* felt it, and immediately desisted, and called back his forces; upbraiding *Abner* at the same time, that, if it had not been for his rash challenge, the armies had parted in peace, and without any act of hostility, in the morning (which plainly shews that *Joab's* instructions were not to begin hostilities). For so some (and, I think, rightly) understand those words—*As the Lord liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother: tho' others understand them very differently, in the sense mentioned in the next paragraph.*

WHOEVER attends to this parly, as it is laid down in the Bible, will, I believe, find something in it, not unlike that between *Hector* and *Ajax*, in the 7th book of the *Iliad*. *Hector* had given the challenge; and when night came on, and the heralds thought it time to give over the combat, *Ajax* insists that *Hector* should first make the motion. The challenge here comes from *Abner*, and he begins the parly of cessation; and *Joab* (for so some understand the text) swears solemnly, that, if he had not done so, he would have pursued him the whole night. *As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone away every one from following his brother.* So *Joab* blew the trumpet, and the people stood still, and pursued after *Israel* no more,

THEY now took their different routes. *Joab* marched all night until he came to *Hebron*; as *Abner*, on the other hand, made the best of his way to *Jordan*; crossed it, and rested no-where, until he reached *Mahanaim*, *Joab* in all probability hastening home, not only to give an account of his conduct to *David*, but also to do the last offices to the remains of his brother; and *Abner* to get out of the reach of *David's* forces.

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### C H A P. III.

*Children born to DAVID in Hebron.*

*ABNER revolts to him, and is slain by JOAB.*

THE battle of *Gibeon* is the only one we hear of, throughout the course of this war between *David* and *Ishbosheth*, which lasted about five years: during which time, the text tells us, *David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul weaker and weaker*. One circumstance that added strength to *David's* cause, was the number of children born to him, in this interval; viz. *Six sons*. Children are the natural strength of all families, but more especially those of kings. *Sons* (saith *Euripides*) *are the pillars of regal houses*: and *Tacitus* tells us, they are firmer tences of empire, than fleets and legions: but *David*, in a nobler strain than  
either



either of them, agreeably to the superiority of his genius, expresseth the same sentiment, (but without any limitation) with surprising dignity: *Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children.*

ISHBOSHETH stood single; but *David's* right would remain with his posterity: and adherents naturally multiply with the supports of right.

BUT here I must beg leave to observe, (little to the honour of polygamy) that *David* had but six sons by six wives, during the space of seven years.

THEIR names, their number, and their mothers, are to be found 2 *Sam.* iii. One of these wives seems indeed to have been taken out of policy; *Maacah* the daughter of *Talmi*, king of *Geshur*. For it appears, both from the book of *Deuteronomy*\* and *Joshua*†, that *Geshur* bordered upon the half-tribe of *Manasseh*, beyond *Jordan*; and the alliance of a prince so situated must have been of great consequence to *David* in his contests with *Ishbosheth*, whose chief strength seems to have lain in that tribe.

THE *Jews* give another account of this matter: They say, that *David* took *Maacah* captive, when he invaded the *Geshurites* (1 *Sam.* xxvii. 8.): but they forget what follows in the same chapter; that he took no prisoner throughout the whole course of those wars; but put all to the sword, both men and women, that came

\* Chap. iii. 14.

† Chap. xiii. 13.

in his way ; the better to conceal his measures from *Achish*. But to proceed :

THE text tells us, that, during the continuance of these contests, *Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul* : and then immediately follows an account of *Isbosheth's* charging him with having gone in to his father's concubine. Both these circumstances, put together, will, I think, ground a just suspicion, that *Abner* meant to set up for himself, when he was strong enough to throw off the mask, and lay *Isbosheth* aside ; it being clearly enough to be collected from the course of this history, that an attempt upon the king's concubine was then understood as an attempt upon the crown.

HOWEVER this might be, *Abner* was enraged at the charge ; broke out into bitter resentment \* ; and ended with an oath, that he would fulfil the promise of GOD to *David*, to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba. And accordingly he set himself to do so, from that moment ; taking the most effectual measures to fulfil his menace.

\* *Am I a dog's head, &c. that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman!*

Some commentators have suggested, I think, with more ingenuity than truth, as if *Abner* resented his being charged with brutal lust in that affair ; and put upon the level with a dog in that point ; an animal that was shut out of some of the heathen temples, upon that account : as a lewd woman seems to be put upon a level with that species of brutes, in that prohibition, *Deut. xxiii. 18. Thou shalt not bring the hire of an harlot, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow.*

HE immediately sent messengers to *David*, with offers of submission and allegiance, upon certain conditions, with an assurance also, of bringing about all *Israel* likewise to pay him allegiance. These conditions were readily agreed to by *David*; who stipulated no condition on his part, but that of having his wife *Michal* restored to him.

THIS Mr. *Bayle* considers as a great cruelty in *David*; to ravish her from an husband, who loved her so well: that is, Mr. *Bayle* thinks it a great cruelty in *David* to disturb *Phaltiel* in an adultery that was agreeable to him; and to redeem *Michal* from one, in all appearance, detestable to her, to restore her to her only husband; the husband of her affection, and her choice; for whom she had so much tenderness, as to save his life, at the hazard of her own. Were it possible to examine Mr. *Bayle's* heart, I dare say, he was full as angry with *Menelaus* for disturbing *Paris*, and with *Agamemnon* for disturbing *Ægisthus*, in their amours. And it is certain, that *Helen* and *Clytemnestra* were much more to be pitied in the violence done to them; for theirs were adulteries of their own choice, but *Michal's* was forced upon her; and, for the rest, they had full as much right to dispose of themselves to their gallants, as *Saul* had to give *Michal* to *Phaltiel*. Surely then, *David* could not be cruel in doing what it had been highly inhuman and iniquitous not to do: he therefore stipulated to have his wife, who was cruelly ravished from him, restored to him.

And



And at the same time, he sent to *Ishbosheth* to demand her of him, as his undoubted right; having paid a dear dower of an hundred *Philistine* foreskins for her \*. *Ishbosheth* immediately sent and took her from *Phaltiel*, and *Abner* conducted her to *David*: *Phaltiel* still following and weeping, as far as *Baburim*, upon the confines of *Jerusalem*, until *Abner* would suffer him to follow her no farther. *Phaltiel* was in distress; but it was such a distress as all they endure, who are grieved to restore what they have no right to possess: and Mr. *Bayle*, from the same principles upon which he quarrels with *David* on this head, is obliged to be highly offended with every honest man, who desires to have those goods restored to him, of which he once was robbed under all the circumstances of cruelty and iniquity. And therefore, in truth, *Phaltiel* is no proper object of pity; and yet, his distress, upon this occasion, is, I think, one of the finest pictures of silent grief, that any history hath left us. Conscious he had no right to complain, or molest *Michal* with his lamentations, he follows her at a distance, with a distress, silent and self-confined; going (saith the text) *and weeping behind her*. However such fine paintings of nature pass unregarded in the sacred writings, I am satisfied, that in *Homer* we should survey this with delight.

\* *David's* humility is here remarkably conspicuous; an hero of a lower class would have mentioned the full price paid down: which was *two hundred foreskins*.

DAVID'S address is, I think, very distinguished on this occasion. In the first place, he knew that his alliance to *Saul*, when *Michal* lived with him in the character of his wife, would make the friends to that house less averse from his claim: and therefore he makes it a fundamental condition in his league with *Abner*, that she should be restored, and restored by him. Nor was there any objection to *David's* receiving her again, since although she lived as a wife with another man, she did so without being divorced by *David*; who, if he had once repudiated her, could never receive her again\*.

IN the next place, though *David* secretly stipulated with *Abner* to bring back *Michal* to him, yet he openly applies to *Ishboseth* to have her restored. This freed *Abner* from the necessity of taking violent measures to restore her; and at the same time gave him a fair opportunity of conferring with *David*, under the character of her conductor, without coming to an open breach with *Ishboseth*.

IT appears from the history, that *Abner* had an absolute ascendant over *Ishboseth*. For, when he threatened openly to transfer the kingdom to *David*, *Ishboseth* did not dare to make him any reply: and, if he now had a mind to be *Michal's* conductor, who could controul him?

HOWEVER, before he went, he took care to communicate with the elders of *Israel*, and gain their consent to his purpose.

\* *Deut.* xxiv. 4.

ABNER had as little religion, as many other ministers of state: and yet, in his conferences with the elders of *Israel*, he put the matter principally upon their duty to GOD. He told them, that *David* was the man they formerly wished for their king: and now was the time for to put their wishes in execution. Nor ought they to hesitate upon doing so, since he was the man by whom GOD had declared he would deliver his people *Israel* from the *Philistines*, and from all their enemies.

THIS, doubtless, was a prophecy then well known amongst them: and the streights they were in from the *Philistines*, who hemmed them in closely on all sides, made it the more readily received.

WHEN *Abner* had settled all things to his desire, he then waited upon *David* in person, to give him an account of all these conferences, and the issue of them: and was received, with his twenty attendants, as the restorer of *Michal*, and the messenger of so much good news, should be, with great joy and festivity. *David* feasted him and them; and *Abner* renewed his engagements to bring over all *Israel* to him.

How empty and ill founded are the purposes of vain man! *Abner*, who promises kingdoms, cannot ensure to himself one single hour of life. *David* had sent him away, and he departed in peace, when *Joab* returned from some expedition against the enemy, in which he had got the better; and, hearing what had passed, immediately went to *David* in the pride of his success,



success, and the great spoil he had taken, to expostulate with him upon the folly of receiving *Abner* in that manner, and placing any confidence in him, who only came thither to betray him. And then leaving the king, apparently, without waiting for his answer, he sent messengers after *Abner* (unknown to *David*) to bring him back: and when he returned, going up to him, under the pretence of a friendly salutation, he stabbed him. Envy, doubtless, and jealousy of *Abner's* great merit with *David*, in gaining over the tribes to him, were main motives to this base action, as well as revenge for the blood of *Asahel*; though it seems to have been concerted between the brothers, solely upon the foot of revenge: at least they avowed no other motive, as appears from the text; which tells us, *So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel.* One or both these were the real motives of the murder, though the pretence was fidelity to their sovereign, and excess of care for his safety.

WHEN *David* heard of this bloody murder, he cried out, (appealing to the Searcher of hearts for his innocency) *I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner:* then breaking out into a bitter, but, probably, a prophetic imprecation, he calls down the vengeance of GOD for it, upon the head of *Joab*, and his posterity; agreeably to GOD's own declaration, that *he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.*

AFTER this the king commanded a general mourning to be made for *Abner* \*; wept over him; and buried him with all solemnity; himself attending upon the bier; which was not the custom of kings. And added this lamentation, which every eye will discern to be truly poetic, in the most literal translation; though none have pretended to determine the measure.

As dies the criminal, shall *Abner* die.

—Thy hands not bound,

Nor to the fetters were thy feet applied:

—As is their fate, that fall

Before the faces of the sons of guilt,

So art thou fallen †.

AT the recital of these words, the grief became universal, and the whole people wept anew.

I CANNOT help observing, that *David* here laments a man, who, if he had survived, would in all probability have been the author of great evil to him. It should seem, that neither *Joab* nor *Judah* could well bear his being placed at the head of *David's* forces (for probably this was the first condition stipulated on *Abner's* part); and, if he were so placed, he seems to have been of a temper, to boast, (like the great earl of *Warwick* under *Edward* the IVth) upon

\* And it is remarkable, that the command began with *Joab*, 2 *Sam.* iii. 31.

† He was killed as a traitor; but, had he been really so, he should have died in chains and fetters, after a fair trial.

any occasion of discontent, that he could make and unmake kings at his pleasure; and was daring enough to take his measures accordingly. So that his death was, in all probability, one of the greatest blessings that could befall *David*.

WHEN any one died among the *Jews*, it was customary with the friends of the family to resort to the house immediately after the funeral, and bring the best provisions they had along with them, to support and refresh their friends in affliction, to the utmost of their power. And surely a more humane and benevolent usage never obtained in any country. The presumption was, that people in affliction forgot, or, it may be, neglected, their proper refreshment, at a time when they most needed it; and therefore it was the business of friendship, and one of its kindest offices, to supply that care. Agreeably to this usage, all the people waited upon the king, *to cause him to take meat*, as the text expresseth it, *whilst it was yet day*; but *David* absolutely refused to touch a morsel; and confirmed the refusal by an oath, that he would taste nothing, *till the sun went down*. He was resolved to clear his innocence by all the tests of real sorrow; and, to satisfy the people, that this was a just occasion of grief, he put them in mind of his dignity to whom he paid it: *Know ye not that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen this day in Israel?*

THIS conduct had its success; the sincerity of the king's sorrow was seen by all the people; and he was universally acquitted of all guilt in



*Abner's* death, Nor was this all: He took care to let his servants know, (and they doubtless took care to inform the people) that nothing but the weak and unsettled condition of his affairs, hindered him from executing just vengeance upon the author of it\*.

IN short, his whole behaviour on this occasion gave great satisfaction to his people; as every part of his conduct did: *As whatsoever the king did* (saith the text) *pleased all the people.* Rare felicity of princes! Or shall I add, felicity peculiar to *David*?

WE learn from hence, that *David* was universally agreeable to his people: and, it may be, the advantages of his person did not a little contribute to his being so.

IT hath been observed by writers of all kinds, how much dignity a graceful mien and person have always given to kings and commanders; and I shall beg leave briefly to observe, once for all, that *David* had these advantages, added to all his other accomplishments, beyond most, if not all other mortals. His beauty hath already been mentioned: his size was suitable; *Saul's* armour fitted him, and *Saul*, we know, *was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards* (1 Sam. x 23). His own praises and thanksgivings to GOD, for the various blessings of his being, demonstrate him remarkably

\* 2 Sam. iii. 39. *And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me.*

swift and strong\*; all which plainly infer dignity of person, and fair proportion. We cannot help forming to ourselves some idea of persons we admire, however imperfect; and mine, of *David's* person, hath, I own, been modelled by that of *Claudian's Stilico* †.

*Jam tunc conspectus, jam tunc venerabilis ibas,  
Spondebatq; ducem celsi nitor igneus oris,  
Membrorumq; modus, qualem nec carmina fin-  
gunt*

*Semideis. Quacunque alte graderere per urbes,  
Cedentes spatiis assurgentisque videbas.*

The moment we behold you, we admire :  
The radiant eye proclaims the valiant chief.  
The limbs so siz'd, and shap'd, as poets paint  
Heroes and demi-gods, less finish'd forms :  
Thro' ev'ry city, as you pass rever'd,  
All rise respectful, and with joy give place.

But to return :

It is hardly possible to dwell upon any relation like this of *Abner*, without being drawn into grave and serious reflections in consequence of it.

\* *Thou makest my feet like harts feet; mine arms can break a bow of steel,* Psalm xviii. 33, 34. Which I am well assured no man now alive can do.

† *De laude Stiliconis, lib. I.*

*A great man fallen*, and fallen by so unexpected and so surprising a treachery! and in the very article of returning to his duty; and in the eve of a great revolution, seemingly depending upon his fate!

TRUE— but then this great man sported with the lives of his brethren; and perhaps deliberately opposed himself to the dictates of his known duty to GOD, for a series of years. He spilled the first blood shed in this civil war; and, it may be, all that was shed: at least, we hear of none, after the battle of *Gibeon*. This is evident, *David* declined all occasion of combat with his adversaries: we hear of him nowhere out of *Hebron*, during the whole course of this long civil war. This surely may be numbered among his felicities, never to have drawn his sword upon a subject, in a contest of seven (and a war of five) years continuance.

It is true, *Abner* was now returned to his duty; but it is as true, that he returned to it now, as he departed from it before, upon a pique; and from motives of ambition, interest, and revenge. He well knew the purposes and declarations of GOD in relation to *David*, and yet he deliberately opposed himself to them. And it is but just in the appointments of Providence, (and nothing is more conspicuous in his government of the world) not to permit the wicked to effect that good, from wrong motives, which they once obstructed upon the same principles. The occasions of duty, once notoriously neglected, seldom return, at least to equal



equal advantage. Let no man decline the good that is in his power: if he once does so, he is no more worthy to be the happy instrument of effecting it, in the hand of GOD.—To conclude;

A GREAT revolution apparently depended upon *Abner's* fate; but it did so only in the eye of human providence; as was plainly manifested from the event.

## C H A P. IV,

*ISHBOSHETH's Murder----A Militia of a most excellent Model instituted by DAVID. Mr. BAYLE's Censures upon DAVID's Intrigues with ABNER, considered.*

WHEN *Ishboseth* heard of *Abner's* death at *Hebron*, the text tells us, that *his bands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled*. He was greatly dismayed, as he well might: for he was in effect disarmed: he had lost both his sword, and his shield, in *Abner*. The people too were greatly concerned; for they lost their great and powerful agent with *David*; the man, in whom both he and they confided; the man (from his authority and credit both with the army and people) best able to conduct and confirm the league, then agreed to

on

on both sides.—But this perplexity did not last long.

ISHBOSHETH had two men, who were captains under him; *captains of bands*, the text styles them: but whether of regular forces, or some flying party, whose business was spoil and prey, is not certain: we are only told, that their names were *Rechab* and *Baanah*, the sons of *Rimmon*, a *Beerothite*, of the tribe of Benjamin. These men came to *Ishbosheth's* house at noon-day, upon pretence, whether of bringing in or taking out wheat, is not clear from the text; and, finding him in his bedchamber, retired (as it is customary in hot climates) from the heat of the day, and fast asleep, they smote him, and cut off his head; and made the best of their way, travelling with it all night, until they came to *David* to *Hebron*.

WHY the circumstance of their fetching wheat is mentioned, is not so much as conjectured by any of the commentators; and yet, I think, to an attentive reader, it is obvious enough. For, as their purpose was to cut off *Ishbosheth's* head, the pretext of carrying corn gave them a fair opportunity of conveying away their head in one of their sacks.

As soon as they reached *David*, they produced their horrid present; and said to the king, *Bekold the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, thine enemy, which sought thy life: and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king, this day, of Saul, and of his seed.*

DAVID,

DAVID, struck with abhorrence and detestation of the villainy, cry'd out to them, in a solemn appeal to GOD, *As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag; who thought I would have given him a reward for his tidings: how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house, in his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hands, and take you away from the earth?* He then immediately commanded them to be slain, and their hands and feet, the instruments and messengers of murder, to be cut off, and hanged up over the pool at *Hebron*, as monuments of terror to treachery; and ordered *Ishbosheth's* head to be buried in the tomb, which he erected for *Abner*.

THE reader will observe, how finely *David's* indignation is painted in that hurry and impetuosity of his language, which carries him directly to the *Amalekite's* execution, without waiting to mention any circumstance that tended to alleviate his guilt; and yet he adds, as if he had mentioned them all at large, *How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person, &c.* If he put the *Amalekite* to death, for but barely saying, that he slew *Saul*, even at his own command, and when his life was despaired of, how much more should he take signal vengeance of their united and aggravated treachery and murder? *Saul* might have some guilt in the *Amalekite's* eye, from his former destruction of  
the



the *Amalekites*; *Ishbosheth* had none with regard to his murderers.

IT is a fine reflection that fell from *Darius*, upon finding that *Bessus* was plotting against him: He told the traitor, “ That he was as well satisfied of *Alexander’s* justice, as he was of his courage: that they were mistaken, who hoped he would reward treachery; that, on the contrary, no man was a more severe avenger of violated faith, than he was.”

IT was upon this principle, that *Cesar* put *Pompey’s* murderers to death; and that the *Romans* sent back the *Faliscian* schoolmaster, under the lashes of his own scholars.

THERE is no one villainy, the human soul so naturally, so instinctively, abhors, as treachery; because it is, perhaps, the only villainy, from which no man living is secure: and, for this reason, every man must take pleasure in the punishment of it.

THE manner of *David’s* appeal to GOD on this occasion is also very remarkable; *As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity*—It was from GOD only that *David* sought for deliverance from his enemies; and he that doth so, needeth not the aid of treachery. Even they that need it, are often observed to punish it: they that need it not, always will. And surely vindicative justice is then seen in its greatest glory, when it is exerted in the chastisement of guilt committed against an enemy: for then no mist, either of partiality or prejudice, can misguide or obscure it.

THE

THE fate of *Ishbosheth*, considered in all its circumstances, is a subject worthy our most serious meditations. A prince slain by his own soldiers, puts one in mind of that observation of *Augustus*, that *It was dangerous to have no guards, but more to have them.* Here *Saul's* son is slain by treachery;—the treachery of two of his own captains, and of his own tribe; the sons of a *Benjamite* of *Beeroth*. Commentators are mightily at a loss, why *Beeroth* is here mentioned, under those particular circumstances, of its belonging \* to *Benjamin*, and of the *Beerothites* flying to *Gittaim*: but I hope, the reader will have some light into the matter, when he considers, that *Beeroth* was a city formerly belonging to the *Gibeonites*, (within the lot of *Benjamin*) but most certainly not inhabited by them, when the *Beerothites* fled to *Gittaim*, after the defeat of *Gilboa*; for *Gittaim* was a *Benjamite* city †: and had those *Beerothites* been *Gibeonites*, they would have fled to any region of the earth, rather than to the protection of the tribe of *Benjamin*; the tribe of *Saul*, the mortal enemy to their race. What then are we to infer from the flight of the *Beerothites* to a *Benjamite* city at that time, but that they themselves were *Benjamites*? And how could

\* The expression in the text is remarkable:—*Beeroth was reckoned to Benjamin*; that is, it was numbered among the cities within their lot: but, strictly speaking, was the property of the *Gibeonites*.

† *Nehemiah xi. 33.*

this city be then inhabited by *Benjamites*, otherwise than by the expulsion and eradication of the *Gibeonites*, when *Saul* destroyed them? And what reason was there for *Saul's* destroying them, but to give their possessions to his friends the *Benjamites*? And certainly there can be no doubt upon the point, when we find them, in fact, possessed of that city.

HERE then, the divine *Nemesis* is very remarkable. *Saul* cut off the *Gibeonites*, to make way for his *Benjamites*; and two of these very *Benjamites*, the sons of a *Benjamite* of *Beeroth*, cut off his posterity, the chief stay and hope of his house; and did this against all the dictates of duty, gratitude, and natural affection.—How adorable, and how dreadful, are the divine retributions of vengeance!

As the sacred historian informs us, that *David* spent seven years and six months at *Hebron*; and yet relates no transactions of that whole time, from the coronation of *Ishbosheth* to his death, except the battle of *Gibeon*, the restoring of *Michal*, and the revolt and death of *Abner*; the reader's curiosity naturally prompts him to inquire, and to search out, if possible, how this space was filled up. This, I own, hath been my case; and I imagine I have found materials on which to ground a rational conjecture upon this point, in the xith and xxviiith chapters of the first book of *Chronicles*, and the xxiiid of the 2d book of *Samuel*. From these three chapters it appears, that *David* had settled the whole affair of his militia, the chiefs and commanders  
of



of his army, their number and order, before the battle of *Gibeon*.

IT appears from thence, that he had appointed twelve courses of military men for the service of the year; each course consisting of twenty-four thousand men, with their proper officers included, to do military duty, wherever occasion required, one month in every year.

IT appears also, (as I apprehend) that the officers of each course were ordinarily the fathers of the principal families, of which that course consisted; for this, I think, is the most natural interpretation of those words, *1 Chron. xxvii. 1. Now the children of Israel after their numbers, the chief fathers, and captains of thousands, and hundreds, and their officers, that served the king in any matter of the courses, (which came in, and went out, month by month, throughout all the months of the year) of every course, were twenty and four thousand.* That is, the people of every course, and their fathers, the officers, made up a body of twenty and four thousand men. So that, as, on the one hand, there was little fear of cruelty and tyranny in the commanders; there was, on the other, as little apprehension of mutiny and disobedience in the soldiers, when the power of their commanders was in the order of their natural authority; and at the same time, as every officer had the honour of his own soldiers, that is, of his own family, near at heart, and they the honour of their fathers and officers,

this

this engaged the commanders to be more diligent in instructing and forming their soldiers to military skill and discipline, and the soldiers to be more diligent in their obedience and discharge of duty.

IT appears also from the same fore-cited passages, that *David* had three commanders in chief, of the first order, three of the second, thirty-one of the third, and thirty of the fourth\*: and that all this was settled before the battle of *Gibeon*, is evident; forasmuch as *Asahel*, who was there slain, is, in two of these places, put at the head of the first thirty, and, in the third, at the head of the fourth monthly course. Now how could this be done, without a sufficient trial and experience both of their capacity and prowess, either in martial prizes, mock combats, or real engagements with the enemy, is not to be imagined.

THAT many skirmishes, and martial adventures, intervened in this time, is out of all doubt; for the sacred historian tells us, *there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David*. There was long war, but, I presume, little bloodshed; inasmuch as we hear of no battle during this whole time, besides that of *Gibeon*—However, as the men were continually in action, I think it not irrational to consider this whole time as principally employed by *David*, in training, exercising, and disciplining his troops—so that, at the conclusion of it, *David* had, in all probability, more martial

\* 1 Chron. xi. 42.

men, and well-trained forces, within his dominions, than, it may be, all the princes now in *Europe* put together. Two hundred and eighty-eight thousand men were trained and disciplined in the single tribe of *Judah*, every year of this interval; so that, at the end of these seven years, we may consider the whole tribe (to the amount of near half a million of men) as thoroughly finished in all martial accomplishments; besides the accession of three hundred thousand valiant men, which came over to him from the other tribes.

I WILL venture to add, that *David* hath left behind him the best model for a militia, that ever this world beheld: such a model, as it would be the truest wisdom and interest of every nation under heaven to imitate.

FOR, first, by this institution, every man in *Israel* became, in his order, a regular, well-disciplined soldier, in perfect consistency with his being, at the same time, a free-holder, and a free-man. The protection and security derived to himself, and to his country, from this wise institution of his sovereign, laid him under all the engagements of duty and fidelity to his prince, without any temptations either to forego or betray any duty he owed to his country. Suppose him brought into the course of this discipline one month in twelve, (and it is certain he could not be brought into it so often) and maintained by his prince for that month, he had still but one part in the well-being of his prince, and eleven in that of his country.



IN the next place, the state by this institution enjoyed all the advantages of security from foreign invasions, and intestine disturbances, (I mean the security of repelling and repressing them) derived to it from a standing army; and, at the same time, avoided all the evils of it; great expence, luxury, and corruption of every kind, from want of due employment for such great numbers; immense detriment to the public, from so many hands unemploy'd in useful labour; and immense danger to its liberties, from their too great attachment to the person and power of the prince, in consequence of their intire dependence upon him.

THE judicious reader's own reflections will easily suggest to him many more advantages arising from this establishment: and to those I refer him.

IF it be asked, What becomes of the king's prerogative in this constitution? I answer, It sufficiently appears, from this history, that he had (besides civil employments) his guards and garrisons, (which, I think, were the only standing forces of the realm) and the appointment of the officers, and commanders in chief, over the army in time of war, and over the monthly courses in time of peace (the common men were elected by the tribes): which I apprehend (with intire deference to better judgments) to be a proper balance of power\*.

\* It is true, Mr. *Harrington* thinks this a model established by *Moses*. Be it then a divine institution, (as I am very well inclined to believe it) yet thus much is certain, that there are no traces of its ever having been put into practice, before the days of *David*.

I CANNOT conclude this chapter, without observing, that one part of *David's* conduct, within this space, hath afforded his revilers new matter of calumny against him.

MR. *Bayle*, (the modern father of infidelity) the only reviler I shall do myself the honour to take notice of, on this occasion, observes of him, that he himself owned “ *Ishbosheth* to be  
“ a *righteous man*, and consequently a lawful  
“ king; and yet he entered into intrigues with  
“ *Abner* to dispossess him.”

WHAT pity it is, that some very ingenious and very learned men will not inquire and examine with a little care and candour, before they decide! — The distinction surely is very plain: *Ishbosheth* might have been a *righteous man*, and yet no rightful king. He might not have been satisfied of *David's* divine designation to the throne (few courtiers take care to convey such disagreeable truths to the ears of their masters); and consequently, he might have been innocent and upright in his opposition to *David*. Will it follow, that *David* was criminal in asserting his right, or *Abner* in returning to his duty? And, if not, certainly there was no guilt in *David's* conferring with *Abner*, and taking all proper measures to recover that right.

BUT suppose this not the case with regard to *Ishbosheth*; suppose him well acquainted with *David's* divine designation to the throne; yet still he might have been righteous with regard to *Rechab* and *Baanah*, though not with regard to *David*. That he was not, in strictness, either

a righteous man, or a lawful king, is out of all doubt: for he could be neither, when he seized the throne, knowing the lawful heir to be then living. And can it be doubted whether he knew, that *Mephibosheth*, the son of *Jonathan* his eldest brother, was then alive?

THE text tells us on this occasion, that *Jonathan*, *Saul's* son, had a son, that *was lame of his feet, and was five years old, when tidings came to Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame.*

MEPHIBOSHETH was lame, but his lameness no way affected his title to the crown. I know of no law of GOD which prohibited a lame man to reign in *Judea*, as the pretended oracle did at *Sparta*.

COMMENTATORS think this circumstance was inserted in the relation of *Ishbosheth's* murder, to shew the encouragement *Rechab* and *Baanah* might have to commit it, from the youth and infirmity of *Mephibosheth*, who was the *avenger of blood*. I have no controversy with them upon that point: I only beg leave to add, that his history is equally pertinent to my purpose, to shew in what sense, and in what sense only, *David* could call *Ishbosheth* a righteous man: for it is highly probable, that he was not so with regard to *David*; and most certain, that he was not so with regard to *Mephibosheth*.



## C H A P. V.

DAVID is crowned by all Israel.

UPON the death of *Ishbosheth*, David's right to the throne was recognized by all the tribes. Then (says the text) came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh: also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

DAVID'S right and merit now triumphed over all opposition that could be made against him. When *Abner* and *Ishbosheth* were dead, whose authority swayed the *Israelites* against their duty, they then acknowledged *David's* divine right to the crown; they then remembered, that he had every qualification requisite to a rightful king of *Israel*, according to GOD'S own limitations, in the xviith chapter of *Deuteronomy*; that he was one of their brethren; and that he was chosen of GOD. They then remembered his valour, and various merits to his people; and the many deliverances he had wrought for them. In one word, they then remembered not only the election, but also the express declaration of GOD himself in his favour; that he would make him the shepherd and captain of his favourite people: and when

they had thus recollected his undoubted title and merits, and their own duty, they immediately convened to crown him.

AND here the learned Dr. *Patrick* very justly observes, that this is the first time we meet with any ruler or governor of a people characterized under the idea of a shepherd; and I cannot but think it remarkable, that the first man so characterized was at first in fact a shepherd; and when we find him, after his advancement to the throne, still characterized by GOD himself under the same idea, what can be a clearer inference, than that GOD'S raising him to be a king, was but exalting him to a nobler office, of the same nature with his first?

How fine a document is this to princes, that they are not, in the intention of Providence, the tyrants, but the guardians of their people! that their business is the preservation and well-being of the flock, from the duty they owe to the great LORD and Owner of both! And how fully is this document confirmed to us, when we find bad princes set forth, in the prophetic style, under the characters of *roaring lions, hungry bears, and devouring wolves!*

HAD *Caligula* rightly considered this, it would have mortified his idle vanity, in imagining himself to be (as an emperor) a being of a better nature than those he ruled, as shepherds are of a species superior to sheep\*. He would indeed have found himself, in the character of a good emperor, and shepherd of his

\* *Philonis legatio ad Caium.*

people, superior, and more dignified; but of a different species from them only in his character of a tyrant; not so much raised to a god by his right to rule, as debased to a brute by his abuse of it; whether to one of *Ezekiel's* bears, *Zephaniah's* wolves, *Jeremiah's* leopards, or the *Psalmist's* crocodiles, or all these, or more than all in one, his own brutality should best determine. How much more had he enobled his nature, and raised at once his own character, and his people's felicity, had he adopted that truly noble and princely maxim of *Cyrus*, that *every man that aspired to the government of others, should take care to be a better man than those he ruled!*

BUT to return :

AMONG the thousands of *Israelites* which crowded to *David* on this occasion, there is particular mention made\* of two hundred of the children of *Iffachar*, *who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.* These were *the heads* of that tribe, *and all their brethren were at their commandment.* These were men well skilled in all the parts of political prudence; who understood the true interest of their country; and what to advise in every exigency, as the occasion and circumstances of the times required. Their superior wisdom was acknowledged by their brethren, who committed themselves to their direction: and their declaration in *David's* favour was, in effect, the

\* 1 *Chron.* xii. 32.



decision of the whole tribe. And who knows but those last prophetic words of *Moses* concerning *Issachar*, in the xxxiiiid chapter of *Deuteronomy*, might have a special reference to this great occasion? *They shall call the people unto the mountain: there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.*

IF this be understood of the mountain of GOD's house, it is certain it was not their business either to call the people thither, or to offer sacrifices; nor is there any known instance where they ever did so: But, on the other hand, it is as certain, that they now called the people to the mountain of *Hebron*, to make *David* king; where sacrifices were offered by all the people, previous to his coronation. And sacrifices offered in ratification of a covenant then entered into, with upright intentions on both sides, might very probably be styled *sacrifices of righteousness*. And this interpretation seems to be strengthened, by reason of this authority in *Issachar* here annexed by *Moses*; *for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand*. This is a plain prediction of commercial skill and wealth in that tribe. Commerce naturally affords those advantages, on which *Homer* founds the superiority of *Ulysses's* wisdom; that *he had seen the manners and cities of many men*. And these advantages, added to superior wealth, in *Issachar*, gave that tribe a natural superiority to call the people to the mountain to submit to *David*.

AFTER all the tribes had resorted to *David* at *Hebron*, recognizing his right to the throne, the elders of all *Israel* assembled there also, to put the crown upon his head.

BUT here it is well worth our observing, that, previous to the conferring of that important trust upon him, the text expressly declares, that *king David made a league with them in Hebron, before the Lord; and (then) they anointed David king over Israel.*

WHAT this covenant was, into which *David* now entered, is not expressly declared. The *Jews* think it was an act of oblivion and indemnity for all injuries done on either side, whether of *Judah* against the other tribes, or all the other tribes against *Judah*: But then the league would rather have been between the tribes, than with the king. And therefore, I think, we cannot reasonably doubt, that this league included a great deal more; that *David* thereby obliged himself to govern according to the law of *GOD*; and the people promised to obey him agreeably to the same law; and both ratified their engagements by solemn sacrifices, and appeals to *GOD* for the sincere and upright performance of them.

BUT here it is asked, How *David* could make a covenant with the people in *Hebron* before the Lord, inasmuch as the ark, exhibiting the divine presence, was not there at this time?

TO this it is obvious to answer, that any covenant, entered into with solemn oaths, and  
attesta-

attestations of the Divinity, may very properly be said to be made in his presence: not to insist, that *David* considered Almighty GOD as more immediately present in the congregations of the princes of his people, (*Psalms* lxxxii. 2.) such a congregation as was now assembled.

Now, in all probability, was erected that altar, to which *Absalom* afterwards resorted, under pretence of performing a vow\*; unless we will rather suppose, that the altar built here by *Abraham*, (*Gen.* xiii. 18.) and without doubt preserved by *Isaac* and *Jacob*, was yet in being.

I SHALL make but this one short observation upon this league which *David* entered into with his people, previous to his coronation; that the doctrine of absolute unconditional obedience seems not to have been received in those days.

THE people that resorted to *David* on this occasion, amounted in the whole to three hundred forty-eight thousand eight hundred valiant men, and experienced warriors; besides the elders of *Israel*, the princes and magistrates of the several tribes; all united as one man, and, what is more extraordinary, all *Israel* consenting with them, as it were with one heart, to make *David* king.

THIS vast assembly of brave men, their princes and leaders, the king, with a magnificence truly royal, feasted for three days together †; not with

\* 2 *Sam.* xv.

† Which however was scarce possible to be effected, had not the contiguous tribes made timely preparations for them, as the text assures us they did.



that mad profusion, nor in those refinements of *Sybaritic* and *Persian* luxury, which we meet with in the boasted entertainments of antiquity. We have here no account of costly rarities; no goblets and vases, of the richest metals and ornaments; no golden couches, or gorgeous embroideries! no naked boys, and minstrels; no temptations to vileness; no allurements to excess; no dazzling and inviting abominations; in one word, no *Neronian*, *Vitellian*, *Alexandrine*, or *Egyptian* extravagancies and outrages of expence: nothing but a magnificence of the earth's best blessings, her noblest productions, in her native abundance, and salutary simplicity, and a bounty best resembling her Maker's: *Bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen; meat, and meal; cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins; and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly\**: a festivity, not the pure effect of vanity, and a waste of wealth, as that of *Crassus*: not protracted, as that of *Nabuchodonosor's*†, to such a luxurious and wasteful length, as tended rather to enervate fortitude, than inspire it; nor polluted, as some of those of the best heathen princes ‡ were, with lewd ceremonies, and detestable imitations of their fabled divinities: but begun and hallowed with sacrifices to the true GOD; and continued (we cannot doubt it) with his praises; ending in peace and unity, and the blessing of a general

\* 1 Chron. xii. 40.

† Judith i. 16.

‡ See *Suetonius* in *Octavio Cesare*, cap. 70.

joy : For (says the text) *there was joy in Israel.*

THE conjecture may be thought too adventurous, as it is contrary to the title of the psalm, and to the interpretations of all commentators, (and yet I cannot help offering it to the reader) that the lxth psalm was composed upon this occasion, and upon this only\* sung, as now it stands, in the assembly at *Hebron*; and, with those variations which we find at the cviii<sup>th</sup> psalm, after the taking of *Jerusalem*. This I am sure of, and this only I will venture to pronounce, that this *Michtam*, (as it is called) this golden memorial of *David*, suits this occasion, and no other that I know of.

\* It was written when the *Israelites* were dispersed and driven out of their dwellings by their enemies—*Thou hast scattered us, v. 1. When they were in terror, and divided amongst themselves: Thou hast made the earth to tremble, and divided it.* This was exactly the condition in which *Israel* was from the death of *Saul*.—The *Israelite* cities, contiguous to the *Philistines*, were deserted by their inhabitants after the battle of *Gilboa*, and, soon after, the kingdom was divided under *David* and *Ishbosheth*.

*David* now beseeches God to heal the divisions of his people : *Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.* And that was done when they all joined to make *David* their king at *Hebron*. God had now given them a centre of union, to which they might resort, as the forces of a broken army to their standard—*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.* *David* was the only centre of union that people ever had, and God now made him the captain and ruler of his people, to manifest the truth of those promises long since made to him.

*David* here sings in the rapture of a man who had just recovered his right, *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.*—*Gilead* and *Manasseh* were just before in the possession of *Ishbosheth*; no king of *Israel* but *David* was ever dispossessed of them, and recover'd them again.

DAVID here promises himself, in a prophetic rapture, the dominion over *Moab* and *Edom*. He considered himself as that rod which should rise out of *Israel*, and smite the corners of *Moab*, and make *Edom* a possession (Numb. xxiv. 17, 18.); and undoubtedly he was so. He next dares *Philistia*, in a bold irony, to triumph over him; plainly intimating that it should not long do so. And what king but *David* subdued the haughty *Philistines*, conquered *Moab* first, and *Edom* after? And when could this prophecy be written, but in the beginning of his reign, (when the *Philistines* were triumphant) and before he had made any of these conquests?

IT appears from this psalm, that *David* expected to be brought by GOD into a strong city, before he was brought into *Edom* by him. *Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?* *Jerusalem* is the only city so characterized, which *David* took before his war with *Edom*.

HE concludes, imploring the divine aid, with a resolution, that, on this presumption, he and his people would act *valiantly*: and accordingly they marched directly to *Jerusalem*, and took it by storm.



## C H A P. VI.

D A V I D *takes* Jerufalem.

**T**HAT this psalm is preparatory to some great and martial purposes, cannot be doubted by any man that reads these words in it: *Wilt not thou, O God, go out with our hosts? Through God will we do great acts; for it is He that shall tread down our enemies.* And with what martial purpose could *David* so properly, and so prudently, begin his reign, as with an expedition against that people which GOD had commanded the *Israelites* to extirpate for their abominable pollutions, in order to dispossess them of a strong-hold, which they yet retained in the heart of his kingdom?

ALL the martial men of the nation were now assembled together, their spirits raised with a magnificent and princely entertainment, and their hearts elated with joy; united in a firm league, under a martial and magnanimous prince, and an eminent leader. Such an union naturally inspired confidence in their own power and prowess; and, in consequence of this, a readiness, and an ardour, to undertake some great achievement. *David* was too wise and too brave a captain, to let this ardour cool. There was nothing wanting to keep it up, but a firm confidence in GOD; and nothing could inflame it, but an assurance of discharging duty towards him.

THE strong-hold of *Zion* was still in the possession of the *Jebusites*, their chief, if not their only fortress; and consequently the resort not only of the remains, but the refuse, of that abandoned people; like that city of *Thrace*, which *Philip of Macedon* peopled with all the miscreants\* of his country, that other places might not be infested with them. To take this fortress, would be to signalize the beginning of his reign to great advantage; and to extirpate that abandoned race, would be at once to bless mankind, and to obey GOD.

WHOEVER considers the genius of *David*, will find him thoroughly disposed to apply himself to GOD upon every occasion. This was not only the strong bent, but is the distinguishing characteristic, of his spirit. The soul of piety breathes fervent and predominant in him. Is it to be imagined then, that he would enter upon this great enterprize, this initiating adventure of his reign, without prayers and hymns to the great Guide and Governor of his life? That many of the psalms are martial hymns to GOD, is out of all doubt. *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered*—† is evidently the beginning of such an hymn, alluding to that prayer of *Moses* (*Numb. x. 35.*) and in general all those psalms that recount the mercies of GOD to the people of *Israel* from the beginning: and nothing sure could better inspire a well-grounded confidence into that people, than a recapitula-

\* Calling it *Poneropolis*, or the city of miscreants.

† *Psalms lxxviii.*

tion of the many, the mighty, the miraculous deliverances from time to time wrought for them, interspersed with ejaculations of thanksgiving; and concluded with an assurance, that GOD would still continue his mercy and loving kindness towards them.

TAKING it for granted, then, that *David* omitted not this noblest of all incitements to fortitude on this occasion, I shall not however take upon me to pronounce upon the particular hymn then made use of; but barely offer that conjecture which seems to me the most rational upon the point; that the cxxv<sup>th</sup> psalm was composed and sung upon this occasion.

IT was evidently made, when some of those nations, which were to be extirpated, were yet in possession of some part of the land, which GOD had allotted to his people; as *Jerusalem* now was in the possession of the *Jebusites*: and contains a prediction agreeable to GOD's own declaration, that it should not remain in their possession. Let us suppose, what will not, I believe, be disputed with me, that a council of war was held before this attempt was made upon *Sion*; and that the bulk of the people were for it, but some against it. The reasons for opposing it must principally be two: the danger and the iniquity of the attempt. The danger and difficulty were confessedly great; the place being so strong, impregnable, and inaccessible. And besides, it might be thought unreasonable to invade a people with whom many of the *Israelites* were now in alliance, as, in fact, many of these execrable



crable nations still lived in the same cities with the *Israelites*; and, we cannot doubt, had alliances and intermarriages with them. Consider this psalm then as an answer to these objections, and nothing can be clearer than the sense and pertinency of it to this occasion.

WAS the fort of *Sion* strong and impregnable? They that trust in GOD are more so: they are as the very rock on which that fort stood. Was *Jerusalem* difficult to be assaulted on account of those inaccessible mountains, which surrounded it, and on which it stood\*? GOD was a much surer defence to his people, than the most inaccessible mountains could be to that city. Was *Jerusalem* the original and rightful possession of the *Jebusites*? Original we cannot say it was, rightful it was, but not now; for GOD, the sole rightful Proprietor, and sovereign Arbitrator, had commanded them to be dispossessed and extirpated. And it was perfectly agreeable to his own declarations, that *the rod* (that is, the sceptre, the dominion) *of the wicked should not rest upon the lot of the righteous*, lest they also be infected by their abominable pollutions. Then follows a prayer, and a prediction; as for those who faithfully discharged the duty they owed to GOD, and to their country on this occasion, GOD would assuredly bless them: but as

\* *Urbem arduam situ opera moleq; firmaverant, quis vel plana satis munirentur. Nam duos colles immensum editos claudebant muri per artem obliqui—extrema rupis abrupta, et turris ubi mons fuisset, &c.*

for those that swerved from it, (*those that decline in their doublings*, says the text) GOD would surely cast them out, together with those wicked wretches, whose interests they abetted; but his peace should be upon *Israel* his people.

I SHALL only add, that when *David* had sufficiently roused the spirits, and supported the confidence, of his people, he led them, (as we are well warranted by the text to conclude) in this height of their ardour and confidence, to *Jerusalem*; and summoned the *Jebusites* to surrender, according to the order expressly enjoined by the law of GOD\*, *Deut. xx. 10, 11, &c.* They returned a contemptuous and insolent answer; that, unless he could take away the lame and the blind, he should not come in thither. *David*, enraged at this answer, immediately commanded an assault; strictly injoining all those that reached the summit of the tower, to throw the lame and the blind into the ditch; and proclaiming at the same time, that whosoever should first gain that advantage, and should *smite the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind*, should be made captain-general of his army. This prize had its desired effect; a general emulation was inspired; the city was quickly taken; and *Joab* had the felicity to be foremost, and was accordingly declared chief.

COMMENTATORS are mightily at a loss to know what can be meant by the *lame and the blind*, in the text; nor are their doubts ill-

\* An order so well known, that the sacred penman thought it not necessary to recount it on this occasion.

grounded; this text being incumbered with more difficulties than are ordinarily to be met with. Some understand the lame and the blind in the ordinary sense of the words; as if the *Jebusites*, confiding in the strength of their fortrefs, should insinuate, that the weakest of their people, the very lame and blind, were able to defend it against *David*. But then it is urged, on the other hand, that these lame and blind are said to be *hated of David's soul*: and could a man of *David's* humanity detest men for mere unblameable infirmities? Then, again, it is said, *Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind*—Now this connecting particle seems to speak the *Jebusites* as different from the lame and the blind, as the lame and the blind from one another. These difficulties have given rise to another opinion; that these *lame and blind* were the *idols* of the *Jebusites*; the statues of those heathen divinities, of which *David* hath said in derision, *eyes have they, and see not—feet have they, and walk not*: and therefore the *Jebusites* thus taunted *David* in return for his reproaches on their religion; confiding that these their divinities, however reviled by him, were yet able to protect them against him.

Now this construction thoroughly accounts for *David's* detestation of these lame and blind, seeing he abhorred idolatry; and accounts also for the phraseology of the text, in which they seem to be considered as beings different from the *Jebusites*.



THE superstition also of an heathen nation, not very remote from the *Jebusites*, seems to concur in confirming this interpretation. For why might not the *Jebusites* place as much confidence in the statues of their gods deposited in their citadel, as the *Trojans* did in the statue of *Pallas* deposited in theirs? And they, we know, persuaded themselves, that their city could not be taken, until that statue was removed.

BUT there is one difficulty still remaining, which is this: If we follow the reading in the margin of the Bible, (which I take to be the true construction of the original text) then the reason why *David* commands the lame and the blind to be smitten, was, because they had said that *David* should not have admission into the place; now what lame and blind could say this, but men so mutilated?

To this I answer, that, in my humble opinion, these expressions of lame and blind, when applied to the *Jebusites*, are to be figuratively understood, and not according to the letter; when *David* reviles the heathen idols, as being lame and blind, &c. he adds, *And they that make them are like unto them, and so are all they that put their trust in them.* It is plain then, that *David* considered these *Jebusites* in their idolatry, to be as stupid and senseless as the idols they adored. And therefore, the reproaches of lame and blind were equally applied by *David* to both\*.

Now,

\* Tho', after all, possibly there might have been some pretended oracle

NOW, if this be the true explication of the passage before us, as some of the ablest critics and commentators warrant me to believe, then, I think, we can have no more room to doubt that the cxvth psalm was an *epinicion*, or triumphal song for this victory; it being plainly an hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving to GOD, for a victory gained over an heathen people, who put their confidence in their idols, and despised the GOD of *David* \*.

AND, however this hymn be adapted to the people of the *Jews*, by many peculiarities; yet it is remarkable, that it hath always been used as an hymn of thanksgiving for victories, by all princes of true piety, from the earliest christian ages, and, very probably, from the age of *David*.

oracle published among the people, as delivered by some of these idols, that they would protect the citadel against *David*.

\* *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the glory—Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?—But our God is in heaven.—Their idols are silver and gold, the work of mens hands—They have mouths, and speak not; eyes have they, and see not, &c. They that make them are like unto them; and so are all they that put their trust in them.*

## C H A P. VII.

DAVID *inlarges* Jerufalem. *His Alliance with Hiram. He builds a Palace, and marries more Wives.*

DAVID, now possessed of the strong fort of *Sion*, fixed his residence there, made it his capital, and called it after his own name, *The city of David*: and, in order to make it worthy of its name, he set himself, with all diligence, to build, to adorn, and to fortify it: and David *built round about* (says the text) *from Millo and inward*. This *Millo* is supposed to be a valley betwixt the two mountains on which *Jerusalem* was built, *Sion* to the north, and *Acra* to the south. The *Hebrew* word signifies *filled up*, and this valley was filled up, partly by *David*, and partly by *Solomon*. The meaning of the text then seems to be, that he fetched his compass from *Millo*, or, as the *Seventy* have it, from *Acra*; filled all that space with a city, and joined it to the strong fort of *Sion*.

THIS is the sense of most commentators upon this passage. But I think it evident from the 32<sup>d</sup> chapter of the 11<sup>d</sup> book of *Chronicles*, that they are mistaken in this comment. For it plainly appears from this chapter, that *Millo* was some tower, or fort, or place of strength of some kind: for when *Hezekiah* repaired all the breaches in the walls of *Jerusalem*, to strengthen the



the city against *Sennacherib*, we read, that he repaired *Millo* also, in the city of *David*; and made darts and shields in abundance. Now there could be no reason for mentioning the repair of this place on this occasion, if it had not been a place of strength. And from the account of his making darts and shields being immediately added to the account of his repairing *Millo*, it hath been conjectured to have been an armoury; and, that it was also a royal palace, appears from the 12th chapter of the second book of *Kings*, compared with the 24th chapter of the second book of *Chronicles*. And therefore it is rational to conclude, that it was at once a royal palace, and armoury, and a place of strength, as the tower of *London* was antiently. And, if I may be indulged in a conjecture upon the point, I imagine it was a strong fortress, consolidated for a considerable height from the foundation; and for that reason called *Millo*, or filled up. Nor is this conjecture without foundation; inasmuch as *Josephus* assures us, this was the manner of building many towers with which *Jerusalem* was fortified.

DAVID'S affairs were now in a flourishing condition, and every day grew better and better; *he went on, and grew great* (says the text). In the literal construction it is, *going and growing*; and the reason is annexed, *for the Lord God of hosts was with him*. As if 'David's condition had been described to us, under the image of a noble river, that swells and enlarges in its progress; continually receiving new accessions to

its grandeur, altho', seemingly, from the accidental influx of the next streams, yet, in reality, (tho' remotely) from the bounty of heaven.

WHAT the sacred historian adds soon after the account of *David's* grandeur, is very remarkable. *And David perceived, that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.* Happy for mankind, were all kings blessed with this way of thinking; would they but learn from this wise and excellent king, (the great glory and honour of their order) that they are appointed to their sovereignty for the good of their people; that this is the great end of their appointment; the pursuit of this end, their great duty; and the attainment of it, their true glory! This is certain,—the great and the good kings of all ages have been in this way of thinking: let me be allowed to mention one; *Plutarch* tells us, that, when the *Ephori* summoned *Agessilaus* from *Asia*, he immediately obeyed; telling them, that *he knew he held the supreme power, not for himself, but for his city, and companions in arms.*

WHEN *David* had repaired and enlarged his city, as far as the present exigency of his affairs required, his next care was to adorn it: and to this, the friendship of *Hiram* king of *Tyre*, now seasonably offered to him, greatly contributed.

THE accounts left us of this king are but short; but yet, I think it evident from them, that he was a magnificent and a generous prince,

and a believer\* in the true GOD. And this character well fitted him to enter into, and to cultivate an alliance with *David*, as he did with uncommon friendship and affection, as long as *David* lived, (for *Hiram*, saith the text, *was ever a lover of David*) and continued it to his son for his sake.

THE *Israelites*, almost wholly addicted to agriculture, were little skilled in the arts of building: *Tyre*, lately raised to great wealth and magnificence, and now become a royal city, abounded with men experienced and knowing in all those arts: with these *Hiram* abundantly furnished *David*; and added moreover cedar-trees, sufficient to build him a palace; which, from the best accounts left us of it, was erected in the midst of the new city; nay, the letter of the text fully justifies this opinion. And *David* (saith the sacred writer) *dwelt in the fort, and called it, The city of David.* And *David* *built round about from Millo.* Is not the plain meaning of these words, that he built round about the fort, the fort being in the centre, and *Millo* in the circumference? The *Septuagint* version is yet clearer, and more express, that he built his city in a circle; and there is no doubt, but that figure was best suited to its situation and circumstances; the city was round (the palace in the centre); one circular street (comprehending a great many others, and itself sur-

\* This, I think, appears from the form of his congratulation to *Solomon* upon his accession to the throne, 1 *Kings* v. 7. *Blessed be the Lord, &c.* In the original it is, *Blessed be Jehovah*—.



rounded by the city wall) encompassed it; and all the rest shot out from the palace into this, like so many rays from the centre to the circumference: a figure the most beautiful, convenient, and comprehensive, that a city could possibly be built in. The city, we know, was built upon a hill, the king's palace upon the top, and in the centre; both in itself, and in its situation, higher than the other buildings: and if we consider the nature of the hills of *Judea* in general, and in particular this hill, we can have little doubt, that all the strait streets ascended to the palace; and consequently the city walls were either on the brow, or on the declivity of the hill.

THIS situation, as it made the city more salutary, and kept it more clean, so it made all attempts upon it from without, more difficult; and all relief from within, more easy and expeditious.

ALL other parts of the kingdom were appropriated each to their several tribes; this city only was common to all: so that this city was a centre of union to all the people of *Israel*, as the palace was to the city. And nothing surely could be a finer emblem of that union which should connect the people of every nation, not only to one another, but to their prince also; making him the true centre of that union.

THIS prince was now the centre of union to his people, and GOD the centre of union to him and them. Nor was this long unsignified by a proper emblem, as shall be shewn hereafter.

WHEN

WHEN *David* had finished his own palace, he soon after proceeded to build houses for his children also. It is expressly said, (1 *Chron.* xv. 1.) *That he built houses in the city of David*: and since we find, in the sequel of his history, that his sons had their separate houses, the presumption is, that these houses were built for them. — He now began to grow very considerable; and, as his grandeur increased, so did that unhappy eastern appendage of it; for he now took more wives and concubines also. This too might have occasioned his building more houses; for it is more than probable, that he might find it convenient to keep some of those wives and concubines in separate habitations. It is probable that each of them had a house separate from his, as *Sarah* had a tent separate from that of *Abraham* (*Gen.* xxiv. 67.).

AND here I must beg leave to observe upon *David's* polygamy, once for all, that it appears to me to have proceeded, in the first place, from an eager and a reasonable desire of issue; and in the next, from what might, in his circumstances, be deemed necessary policy; he had lived at least three years with *Michal*, without having had any child by her; and it is impossible to say, whether he would not have done so his whole life long, had she not been cruelly forced from him, and given to another. It will not, I believe, be much doubted, that he was then at liberty to marry again: and accordingly he married *Abinoam*; and, having no child by her, he married *Abigail*.

HE had both these wives with him, when he came to *Hebron*; but no child by either for at least five years. He well knew of what importance the increase of his family would be to his establishment upon the throne: it appears evidently, (from *1 Sam. xxiv. 20.*) that God had promised to establish him in the kingdom of *Israel*. Children were necessary to that end; and the most probable means for obtaining this advantage was, by taking more wives: and as these wives were well nigh as much interested in his establishment as himself, it is at least possible, (to say no more) that he took no subsequent wife, but with the consent of the precedent.

BUT, supposing this not the case, we shall find, upon further inquiry, that GOD had promised to establish the kingdom not only in his own person, but also in his posterity: some such known promise as this could only be the ground of that express declaration of *Abigail's* (*1 Sam. xxv. 28.*); *For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.* Polygamy was not then understood to be any way forbidden by Almighty GOD. GOD's promises must be fulfilled, and there was not the least reason to hope they should be fulfilled through any of the wives he had hitherto taken. At the same time policy required him to strengthen his unsettled state by new alliances; and how was this end so effectually to be attained, as by marrying into the families of greatest power and credit in his country, and out of it?



THIS was, in all human probability, the most effectual (apparently the only) means of making his *house sure*.

THIS consideration takes *David's* polygamy intirely out of the light of luxury and licentiousness, and places it in that of prudence; and, as some think, even of piety: but in this I cannot help differing from them. It may be the effect of a wise, but it must at the same time be owned too worldly an intention, to bring the purposes and promises of GOD in his favour, to a full and timely accomplishment.

THE sacred writer informs us, that he had six sons born to him in *Hebron*, and eleven in *Jerusalem*. Now, besides the security to his house from so numerous an issue, it is possible he might have proposed to himself many other advantages from it; among others, an emulation of merit among his children, to entitle them to a preference in the father's esteem, upon the same principle, that *Philip* told *Alexander*, upon his complaining that his father had many sons by several women; *Therefore, since you have many rivals with you for the kingdom, take care to excel in virtue, and all valuable accomplishments, that you may not seem to have received the crown through my means, but your own merit.*

ONE objection indeed lies against him, upon this head; *viz.* his having married a strange woman, the daughter of *Tolmai* king of *Geshur*, a practice prohibited to the *Jews*.

IT is true, there was a general prohibition to that purpose; yet, such, however, as admitted many exceptions. A *few* might (under certain regulations) marry even a slave taken in war, (*Deut. xxi.*) and much more a profelyte to their religion; and *David* was justified in this practice, by the example of *Joseph*, *Moses*, and even his own ancestors\*; and why might it not please *GOD* to give him issue by *Maacah*, as he gave *Boaz* issue by *Ruth*?

HAD Mr. *Bayle* considered this, he had saved himself the trouble of a great deal of idle and ignorant censure upon this head; but then it must be owned, on the other hand, that he had lost a great deal of his darling pleasure of railing against *David*.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*A Digression, containing a short Description and Account of Jerusalem.*

AS *Jerusalem* became the metropolis of the kingdom under *David*, who adorned and fortified it, built a considerable part of it, and called it after his own name; I conceive it not foreign to the design of this history, to lay some account of it before the reader: previously informing him, that my purpose is not to give a long history, and laboured description, of that

\* *Salmon* and *Boaz*, *Ruth* iv. 20, 21.

city, but barely to lay before him, as briefly, and as clearly, as I can, those particularities (little insisted upon by other writers) that distinguish it from all others; but at the same time far from pretending, that I can inform the reader in the true state of it, as it stood in the days of *David*.

VILLALPANDUS, who hath made more learned and accurate inquiries, concerning the situation, form, and buildings of old *Jerusalem*, than all the other writers I could ever see or hear of, put together, describes the city of *David* to be of a circular form, built upon an hill, surrounded with a broad and deep trench, hewn whether by art or nature, out of the natural rock. The probability is, that the greater part of this trench was a natural hollow; and that the stones, cut out for the buildings of the fortress, completed the trench; which was defended by a wall of great strength, erected upon its inner edge, and that also defended and adorned with strong and square towers at regular distances. These towers are described to us, as built of white marble, the lowest sixty cubits high\*, and the highest one hundred and twenty, all exactly of one level on the top, although in themselves of very different heights, according to the declivity of the ground on which they stood.

ON the centre and summit of this hill, (as the best writers agree) stood the king's palace, consisting (according to *Villalpandus's* description) of a large square court, defended by

\* *Tacitus* says, feet.

flankers,



flankers, from one of which was the descent, by stairs, into his garden; which was disposed (as *Villalpandus* designs it, and as the nature of the ground seems to imply) in some form not far removed from that of a quadrant; a figure as fair, and as well fitted for all the purposes of a pleasure-garden, as any I know. To this was afterwards added another garden, without the city of *David*, by another descent, (*Nehem.* iii. 15.) which was probably the work of some succeeding king.

BENEATH, and around the city of *David*, lay the antient city of *Jerusalem*, which mount *Sion* protected as a citadel, and crowned as a regal diadem.

THERE seem to have been four buildings of distinction in the city of *David*, besides the palace, and the royal sepulchres; and those were the tower of *David*, the tower of Furnaces, the house of the Mighty, and the high-priest's palace.

THE tower of *David* is said to have stood in one corner of the city; but, forasmuch as the city was circular, (a figure which admits of no angles) it was doubtless built (as *William of Tyre* describes it) upon an angle of the rock, which projected beyond the city walls: which exactly answers to the situation assigned to his tower by the learned and classic Mr. *Sandys*, who tells us, that it stood aloft on the utmost angle of mount *Sion*; and hath left us a draught of its ruins, then extant; and adds, that it was of wonderful strength, and admirable beauty. Nor indeed can the strength of it be well doubted, if it were built,

as *William of Tyre* tells us it was, of square stones, indissolubly cemented and knit together by lead and iron. And, if that was the case, I think we may fairly infer, that this tower was a kind of citadel to *Sion*, as *Sion* was to *Jerusalem*.

THE beauty and fine proportion of this fabric, as well as its use, may, I think, be also fairly inferred from that celebrated comparison of *Solomon's*, in the 4th chap. of the *Canticles*, at the 4th verse; *Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.* And doubtless some remains of this tower may be still extant, even consistently with *Josephus's* account of the demolition of all the fortifications of that city except three towers. Nobody pretends that this was left undemolished, although probably not rased from the foundation; for, as the strength of the city then lay round the temple, it is probable, that the total demolition which *Josephus* speaks of, refers only to the temple, and the fortifications on that side.

*JOHN PHOCAS VENETUS* speaks of a tower at *Jerusalem* in his time, which he styles a most mighty one (*Πύργος πανμεγαλτερος*) called by the inhabitants the tower of *David*, and conjectured by him to have been built upon the foundation of it. And *Rawolf* tells us, there is still, within the *Turkish* fort there, a strong high tower built up with great free-stone, which is quite black through age; wherefore (adds he)

some say, that it did antiently belong to the fort, and was built by one of the kings of Judah \*. This seems to imply, that, although the Romans demolished all the strength of the city, they did not totally rase all its antient monuments; nor indeed does there seem to be any reason why they should, but rather the contrary.

THE next remarkable building of *Jerusalem*, and probably (but not certainly) in the city of *David*, was the tower of Furnaces; which *Adricomius* reports, from tradition, to have been a kind of *pharos*, or watch-tower, both to sea and land; and it is certain, that from the advantage of its situation it might thoroughly answer all the ends of a light-house, both to the *Mediterranean* and the *Red-sea*: and as it is likely from the name, that there were many fires lighted up in it at once, it was probably contrived to diffuse its lights over a considerable part of the city also; and must have been, in that respect, a glorious ornament, and of excellent use. Possibly too, it might have been intended as an emblem of that nobler Light, which was to shine out from *Jerusalem*, and enlighten the world far and near.

THE house of the Mighty is thought to have been a palace erected by *David* in honour of his worthies or chieftains in war, in which they all had apartments assigned to them, proportioned to their reputation and merit in arms; and were always ready at hand, for council or

\* *Ray's Travels*, (2d edit.) vol. II. p. 230.



aid, as the king's affairs required; and, in their hours of leisure, superintended and instructed the youth in their military exercises: and so answered all the purposes of a royal academy, for the science of war. A scheme for inspiring heroism, and diffusing military skill and prowess through a nation, perhaps beyond any that ever was known in the world!

AMONG these heroes of *David* Adino the Eznite had the chief seat in all their assemblies (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 8); nor is it any way improbable, that the first rank in that society, and first apartment in that palace, might be distinctions of as much honour amongst them, as the first titles of nobility amongst us. And it is confessedly an high point of political prudence, to make honorary, rather than pecuniary or profitable distinctions, the rewards of virtue, and the incitements to it.

THE next building of eminence in the old *Jerusalem*, was the high priest's palace, generally supposed without the city of *David*; the extent of which may, in some measure, be estimated from the account we have of the apportioning of the walls of *Jerusalem*, in the rebuilding, or rather repair of them, under *Nehemiah*, (ch. iii. 20, 21.) in these words: *Baruch, the son of Zibbai, earnestly repaired one piece of it, from the turning unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest; and after him, repaired Meremoth, the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, the other piece (of the wall),*

from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib.

I AM unwilling to give all the offence that some of my readers may be too much inclined to take, by making the inferences which would obviously follow from this account: And therefore I shall only observe, that outward distinctions of state and dignity were not then deemed any way inconsistent with the characters of the true ministers of God. *Rich* and *blameless*\* were not then deemed epithets incompatible with the sacred name of *priest*; nor did *David* imagine, that they who were more immediately set apart for the service of God, should be precluded from such a portion of those blessings which he pours out upon the earth, as would best enable them to imitate his beneficence.

THIS is a short account of old *Jerusalem* under *David*: but when the temple was afterwards erected upon mount *Moriah*, an eminence then perhaps equal to *Sion*; when *Millo* was added, and the house of the forest of *Lebanon* †, and the palace of *Pharaoh's* daughter, and *Solomon's* own palace, which was thirteen years in building; then might the sacred writer well cry out, in transport ‡, *Let mount Sion rejoice*:

\* Ἀρπείδος ἀπόμων ἱερεὺς. *Homer. Iliad. 5.* And again speaking of *Hypsanor*, he calls him son of the valiant *Dolopion* priest of *Scamander*, who was honoured as a god by the people,

*Priest of the stream, and honour'd as a god.*

*Ibid. Mr. Pope.*

† Supposing that (as some critics do) a palace built in *Jerusalem*, which I believe it was not.

‡ *Pf. xlviij.*

*let the daughters of Judah be glad. Walk about Sion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to them that come after.*

THE next thing remarkable of *Jerusalem* is its situation upon more than one eminence, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills; a situation as salutary, and as delightful, as can well be imagined, in the centre of *Judea*; and, what is very remarkable, and well worthy our most serious consideration, in the centre of the whole known world.

THIS is a circumstance which the sacred writers were well acquainted with, as appears sufficiently from the 5th chap. of *Ezekiel*, ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord God, This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her.* And for what purpose he did this, is clearly illustrated from many other texts; thus in the 51st *Pf.* ver. 1, 2. *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Sion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.* Here the Almighty kept his court; and from hence he sent out his ambassadors the prophets, to publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with more ease, and speedier conveyance, than could possibly have been done from any other region of the habitable world. And that this was the seat and fountain head of true religion from the beginning, is evidenced beyond



all doubt, from the history of the *Jewish* nation. This was the seat of *Melchisedek* the king, and high-priest of the living GOD, in the days of *Abraham*; and how great his dignity was, and how eminently distinguished by that office, evidently appears from *Abraham's* acknowledging him his superior, and bending to him for a blessing, even when he was eminently the favourite of heaven, and in the height of his glory, just returned from the conquest of kings.

How long he continued in this most glorious of all earthly employments, a teacher and an example of true religion, (a shining light to the surrounding regions of the earth) is nowhere said, or even suggested; but evidently long enough to make the sin of *Sodom* unpardonable, and, possibly, the sins of some succeeding generations in *Canaan*.

WHAT the state of *Jerusalem* was, from this time to the days of *David*, nowhere appears; but this is certain, that, from *David* to *JESUS CHRIST*, *God was known in her palaces as a sure refuge*. *Jerusalem* was (although with some interruptions) the chief, if not the sole source of true religion, to the whole habitable world around it. From hence, as from a central point, the light of the law first, and the gospel afterwards, shone out to the surrounding nations; and to this end this city was chosen, was eminently and emphatically *the chosen city of God, beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth*; more especially, when *the Sun of righteousness rose up in it, with healing in*

*in his wings, the glory of his people Israel, and a light to lighten the Gentiles, till all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

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C H A P. IX.

*The Philistines and neighbouring Nations invade Israel, and are defeated in two Battles.*

WHILST civil war subsisted in *Israel*, between the partizans of *David* and *Ishbosheth*, the *Philistines* contented themselves with being calm spectators of their mutual ravages and conflicts, which naturally tended to their mutual destruction: but when all these were ended, in their unanimous election of *David* to the throne, and that election succeeded by all the happy beginnings and omens of a prosperous reign, a powerful and inveterate enemy expelled from the heart of his kingdom, an impregnable fortress taken, and a royal city built and fortified, and crowned with a magnificent palace, and the alliance of a powerful neighbour prince offered unsought; they then began to be alarmed, and thought this the fit season to crush the growing power of this prince, before it rose to a greater height.

BUT it was natural for them to find upon inquiry, that they had now, perhaps, taken this

resolution too late: *David* had now the most numerous and best disciplined militia upon the face of the earth; and such soldiers, fighting their own and their country's battles, under the command of such a captain, were sufficient to strike terror into the boldest of his enemies. The *Jews* had hitherto been too hard for the several nations of *Canaan*, that opposed them; they had exterminated some, and brought others under tribute; no single nation could stand against them under the conduct of such a leader as *David*. The *Philistines* had too well experienced his prowess, to imagine themselves singly a match for him; and nothing but an union of all the neighbour nations, could effectually oppress or destroy him.

THAT there was an universal confederacy against *Israel*, entered into by all the surrounding nations in the days of *David*, is undeniably evident from the lxxxiiiid *Psalms*, if that was either written or set to music by *Asaph*, as the title implies it to have been; and it is certain, it can suit no other time but this, throughout the whole series of the old Testament history\*. And that such a league as is referred

\* I am sensible, that most commentators refer the lxxxiiiid *Psalms* to the days of *Jehoshaphat*; but for what reason, or what colour of reason, I own, I can neither learn nor imagine. The enemies then assembled against *Jehoshaphat* are expressly said to be the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, and *Seirites*; and to have come from this side *Syria*, and passed the salt sea, quite out of the course of the *Philistine* invasions: besides that he himself, in his prayer to *G O D*, offered up in the greatest terror of his enemies, numbers up only the children of *Ammon*, *Moab*, and *Mount Seir*: and we cannot doubt



referred to in that psalm, was entered into at this time, appears with sufficient evidence from the cxviii<sup>th</sup> *Psalms*, where *David* (whose psalm this is confessed to be) expressly declares, that *all nations compassed him about*; and it appears from the same psalm, that this compassing was before he had destroyed them: and therefore it was in the beginning of his reign.

THE same thing also appears from chap. vii. of 2 *Samuel*, ver. 1. where it is expressly said, that the Lord had then *given him rest round about from all his enemies*.

ADD to all this, the testimony of *Josephus* upon the point; who affirms\*, that the *Phœnicians*, *Syrians*, and several other nations, joined with the *Philistines* against *Israel* at this time. And the reason and nature of the thing vouches for his veracity; as it is most credible, that the attempt was made when it was most prudent and practicable; which was in the beginning of his reign, before his dominion was yet throughly

doubt but that both his fears, and the occasion, called upon him to recount the whole number of his enemies: and when they destroyed one another, there is no mention of any other that was destroyed but those three nations. Add to all this, that the fear of the LORD is said to have fallen upon all the *kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah*, (and consequently upon the *Arabians* and *Philistines* contiguous to it) *so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat*. And, to crown all, these two nations are expressly said to have paid him tribute. Give me leave to add, that it is strangely improbable (not to say absurd) to imagine, that *Jehoshaphat* should in this *Psalms* (lxxxiii.) pray to GOD for such a deliverance as he had wrought for his people by the hands of *Barak*, *Deborah*, and *Gideon*, and forget, or omit, all those which he had wrought by the hands of *David* his father.

\* *Antiq.* l. 7. c. 4.

established, and the wounds of a long civil war well healed. And that the express purpose of this league was to exterminate the whole race of *Israel*, is evident from the lxxxiii<sup>d</sup> *Psalms*, ver. 3, 4. *They have imagined craftily against thy people, and taken counsel against thy secret ones; they have said, Come, and let us root them out, that they be no more a people, and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.* Accordingly they assembled their whole force, and spread themselves abroad in the valley of *Rephaim* (a large and rich valley to the west of *Jerusalem*); no doubt to intimidate the *Israelites* with their numbers, as it was natural to hope they might. Armies so numerous were truly dreadful, especially when they were so well united, when *David* could say of them, as he does in the fore-cited psalm, *They have consulted together with one heart, they are confederate against thee; the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre* \*.

THIS

\* There are two objections to this account: the first is, That the *Philistines* only are mentioned in the Bible to have warred against *David* at this time; and the second, That the *Tyrians* are in this psalm mentioned among *David's* enemies, tho' *Hiram* their king was then at peace with him.

To the first, it is obvious to answer, That confederate armies are frequently denominated from the principal host: as in the late war we called that the *French* army, which opposed the confederates, though considerable bodies of *Bavarians, Irish, Swiss, &c.* helped to compose it. And I humbly apprehend, that the reason  
why

THIS is plainly spoken in the spirit of a man who had all these several nations, their different encampments, tents, and ensigns, then before him, all which (the *Syrians* only excepted) were long since familiar and well known to *David*: nor was it hard for him to distinguish them with great exactness, considering that their encampment was in a valley of considerable extent, contiguous to *Jerusalem*, from whose surrounding eminences he might see them to great advantage: which, as I before observed, seems to have been partly their purpose, upon the same principle of conscious security, that made *Scipio* carry *Hannibal's* spies through every part of his camp, to intimidate his enemy with the true account of his number, order, and discipline\*.

UPON the enemy's approach to *Jerusalem*, *David* quitted it, and retired to the cave of *Adullam* †; with whose fastnesses, and various  
advan-

why the *Philistines* are not first mentioned in this Psalm, is, that the author recounts the several armies, in the order in which he beheld them ranged in their several encampments.

To the second I answer, that the king of *Tyre* might be in friendship with *David*, and the princes not: and it is well known, that the very merchants of *Tyre* were princes (as well they might, when the wealth of the world was in their hands); as the *Philistine* king had lately been in friendship with *David*, and the lords not; or as the emperor might now be in friendship with *England*, and some of the *electors* not.

\* The same thing is reported of *Xerxes*.

† Here he had all the advantages of a fortress without exposing either himself, or any of his cities, to the danger and inconveniencies of a siege.

It is objected, That *David* was not long after this in a condition to invade the *Philistines*: and then a question is asked, Is a man always in readiness to invade, and not to defend?

I answer,



advantages of defence, he had long since been well acquainted. Here he continued, (we cannot doubt) till his forces were gathered, in such numbers, and under such appointments and regulations, as he thought best for the occasion; but how long, is not told. From the situation the enemy was in, in a rich valley, the nearest granary of *Jerusalem*, and then covered with grain, about the beginning of the barley-harvest, it is probable he suffered them to continue there as little time as he could.

WE only know, that one memorable event preceded the ensuing battle: *David*, oppressed with thirst, and probably exhausted with fatigue, expressed an eager wish for a draught of water from the well of *Bethlehem*. The *Philistines* were then garrisoned in that town, and their host extended from thence to the farther end of the valley of *Rephaim*; so that there is not the least appearance of *David's* having conceived the most remote possibility of obtaining his wish. However, three of his chiefs, or of his thirty mighty men, combined to gratify it; broke through the *Philistine* host; and brought the water: they presented it to him; and he received it with a most humane and religious

I answer, A man may be always in readiness to invade with a small number, and yet not in a condition to repel the invasion of a greater. When a man invades his enemies, he takes care to be most in a readiness, when they are least so. *David* might once in every month be in a condition to invade his enemies with forty-eight thousand men, and yet not in a condition of repelling a very numerous invasion every day of that month, with a body but of twenty-four thousand.

horror,

horror, for the risque they had run in fetching it. What they had purchased at so dreadful an hazard of their lives, which they thus resolved to sacrifice for his service, he looked upon as an offering of blood, sacred to GOD, and poured it out in sacrifice to him.—*My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing!—Shall I drink the blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it—Therefore he would not drink it.*

THE humane and generous reader's heart will sufficiently suggest to him reflections suited to this great resolution: and to that I refer him.

WE cannot doubt of this adventure's having inspired the *Israelite* army with an happy omen of success; and, in consequence of that, an ardour for the engagement.

THERE were in *David's* army (as I before observed) three heroes of the first rank, three of the second, and thirty of the third. I humbly apprehend, that the three first were they who brought *David* the water of *Bethlehem*: for agreeably to this sense might that passage, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 13. be rendered, *The three captains over the thirty chief\**: and at the close of the adventure of *Bethlehem* (1 *Chron.* xi. 19.) it is said, *These things did these their mightiest*; which, I think, plainly speaks them the

\* Some authors think, that the whole number was but thirty at first, and that they increased in proportion, as the prowess and heroism of the nation advanced; but that however they still retained the name of the *thirty*.

three chiefs of the first rank, in the judgment of the *English* translators.

WHEN the *Israelite* army was sufficiently prepared and animated for the engagement, *David*, who placed no confidence either in human prudence or prowess, (his sole dependence was on GOD) inquired of the LORD, by the high-priest, whether he should go up against the *Philistines*, and with what hopes of success; and, being encouraged by GOD to go up, he immediately marched his forces against the confederate host.

CONSIDER the lxxxiiiid Psalm then, as an hymn to the GOD of hosts, composed and set to music, upon this occasion, and sung by the whole *Israelite* army in their march to the assault; and it needs no other comment. And in this light it is one of the noblest martial hymns that ever was composed; and the best fitted to inspire a calm, and, what is the truest and steadiest of all others, a religious fortitude.

THE beginning of this psalm always puts me in mind of that most lively and spirited description of the *Trojan* and *Greek* armies going to battle, in the 3d book of the *Iliad*; the *Trojans* marching with noise and tumult, and the *Greeks* in a still silence; keeping back their swelling ardour, and confining it with difficulty to their own heaving bosoms.

DAVID here considers GOD on the one side, and the confederate enemies on the other; the confederates loud in threats and tumult, and  
GOD



GOD with difficulty keeping silence\*. *David* well knew, that one word from the mouth of GOD was sufficient to blast and confound his enemies†; and therefore he begins this psalm with beseeching him to keep silence no longer :  
 —*Hold not thy tongue, O God—keep not still silence—refrain not thyself, O God— for, lo, thine enemies make a tumult; and they that hate thee, have lift up the head.*

AND now it was, in all probability, that the three worthies above-mentioned challenged ‡ the whole adverse army (it may be presumed, in the same manner *Goliath* had done that of *Israel* before) to send out three champions to contend with them in combat; which they (probably confiding in their numbers) seem to have declined, inasmuch as we hear no more of the matter, than that the defiance was given.

WHEN the onset was made, the *Israelite* army, whether terrified, or oppressed by numbers, gave way; and *David*, and his three worthies of the first order, were left alone in the midst of the enemy §. *David* was now, in all human appearance, utterly lost: but now was

\* *Psalms*. lxxxiii. 1. *Refrain not thyself, O God—*

† *Psalms* xlvi. 6. *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

‡ *2 Sam.* xxiii. 9.

§ *2 Sam.* xxiii. 9. *1 Chron.* xi. 13. It is not clear, whether this flight of the *Israelites* was in this battle with the *Philistines*, or some other. But many circumstances have inclined me to believe it was in this. When the reader has well weighed the text referred to, he will judge for himself; always remembering, that, be the battle which or when it will, *David's* prowess was equally distinguished; and the praise of it the same.

the time for GOD to interpose in his favour, when all human appearances failed. GOD had promised to deliver his enemies into his hands ; and *David* well knew, it was equally in the hand of Omnipotence, to effect this by a few, as by an infinite number. And, to support him in this assurance, he was well acquainted with the promise of GOD to his people, *Deut. xxxii. 30.* that, if they were obedient, *one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight.* He could not but reflect, that he was now at the head of those three brave men, who had so lately broken through the whole *Philistine* host, to relieve his thirst : would they exert themselves less to save his life ? Animated by those assurances, *David* rushed in upon his enemies, with such a force and fury as was not to be resisted ; and was so well seconded by his three brave companions, that they put the whole adverse army into confusion ; which the *Israelites* perceiving, returned rather to the rout\* than the combat : nor let any man think this strange, who remembers the exploit before related in the case of *Jonathan* and his armour-bearer, *1 Sam. xi.*

THAT *David* considered GOD as the great agent in this case, and himself only as a secondary instrument, appears evidently from *1 Chron. xiv. 11.* *Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand, like the breaking of waters.* Or, as it is, *2 Sam. v. 20.* *The Lord*

\* *2 Sam. xxiii. 10.*

*hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters;* or rather, as it should be translated, GOD hath broken or divided mine enemies, as waters are broken; that is, as a storm breaks and divides a flood: *therefore he called the place Baal perazim, or the plain of breaches.*

THIS allusion, in my humble opinion, contains as fine an image, perhaps a finer than any in *Homer*. It is familiar with *David* to consider an host of enemies as a great flood, or sea, ready to break in and overwhelm him with its waves. Thus, *Psalms* xviii. 4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.* lxxxviii. 17. *They came round about me like water, and compassed me together on every side.* xciii. 3. *The floods are risen, O Lord; the floods have lift up their voice, the floods have lift up their waves.*

NOW an army coming up in one vast body, broken in upon by a brave enemy, as by a tempest, put to flight, and in their flight scattered into a great many broken parties, is finely compared to a vast flood or body of water broken and dispersed into many streams\*. And now, perhaps, the cxxivth *Psalms* was first sung, as an hymn of thanksgiving, for the deliverance of *Israel* from a combination of the neighbour nations against them.—*If the Lord had not*

\* *David* was not improbably led into this train of thinking, by that promise of GOD to his people, *Deut.* xxviii. 7. *They (thine enemies) shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.*



been on our side, now may Israel say, if it had not been the Lord, who was on our side—— they had swallowed us up quick, the waters had overwhelmed us\*, &c.

I WILL not now take upon me to say, that *Homer* is indebted to *David* for many of the finest images in his works; but the learned reader will easily see, from an attentive observance of that passage, *The Lord hath broken mine enemies before me*, whom *Homer* copies after, when he represents the gods preceding their favourite heroes in battle, and mowing down the hostile ranks before them.

THAT the history of this battle was written under the direction of *David's* modesty and humility, guided by the Spirit of GOD, appears evidently from hence; that the exploits of his companions on this occasion are very exactly related, and the numbers slain by them carefully set down, (and immense they were) 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1 *Chron.* xi. without the least mention of one man slain by him: though it appears plainly from the forecited passages, (1 *Chron.* xiv. 11. 2 *Sam.* v. 20.) that he led and opened the way, in the onset.

THE ingenious reader will, I believe, agree with me, that the heroism of such humility is infinitely superior to all the exploits of prowess.

WHAT number of the hostile forces fell in this battle, is no-where said: we are only told

\* The relation between this hymn and the preceding account of *David's* crying out, *The Lord hath broken mine enemies by my hand, as waters are broken*, is, I think, sufficiently evident.

in one place, (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 12.) in the usual piety and simplicity of the Scripture style, *That the Lord wrought a great victory*; and in another, (1 *Chron.* xi. 14.) *That the Lord saved by a great deliverance.*

IN all appearance, the defeat was not very destructive to the enemy; inasmuch as we find them soon after returning to the war, possibly in the very same year. However, that the rout was precipitate and total, appears evidently from hence; that, when they fled, they left their gods behind them. And *David* and his men destroyed them with fire, as the law directed.

THE relation of this battle is no sooner ended, than the sacred historians recount another *Philistine* inroad: *The Philistines came up yet again*, (say the sacred historians) *and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*

DAVID was as regular in his returns to GOD, as his enemies in their inroads upon him. He immediately inquired of GOD, with his usual piety and humility, how to conduct himself on the occasion; and was directed, not to advance to the engagement with an open front, as before, but to fetch a compass, and come secretly behind them, over-against a certain mulberry-grove, which, I apprehend, stood at the rear of the enemy's camp; and when he heard a sound of going on the tops of the mulberry trees, (probably the sound of a mighty host rushing to battle) then was he to pour upon his enemies with all his force: for that was the signal of

GOD'S going out before him, to destroy and defeat them.

DAVID obeyed the divine monition, and put the whole host to the rout: which, we may conceive, was easily done, when they were surprised with more than all the terrors of a mighty hostile army in their rear; which they might easily imagine to be another, more numerous, and more formidable, than that of *David's*.

DAVID made the best advantage of this confusion and consternation; ply'd them hard, and had the slaughter of them from *Geba* to *Gazar*, a *Levitical* city of *Ephraim*, upon the *Philistine* confines; a length of at least twenty miles.

I THINK it evident to a demonstration, that the *lxxivth Psalm* was written upon this occasion, although not by *David*: and as it is tinged with mirth and wit\*, (not without a spirit of true piety) it is not unnatural to imagine, that it now became a favourite song with the people.

AND now also, as I conceive, was composed the *cxviiiith Psalm*; and sung in the tabernacle, as an *epinicion*, or hymn of thanksgiving to GOD for this victory. It begins thus, *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is gracious: because his mercy endureth for ever.* And then goes on

\* This criticism will, I believe, be justified to the candid reader, when he considers the 5th and 6th verses of this *Psalm*. Ver. 5. *The stout hearted are spoil'd, they have slept their sleep, and the men of might have not all found their hands.* Ver. 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*



with such a flow of gratitude to GOD, such expressions of trust and confidence in him, and glory to him, and adds to all this such descriptions of his enemies, in such a variety of lights and images, as are the peculiar distinction of *David's* genius.

NOTHING is more common with *Homer*, than to describe an army under the image of a flood of waters, wave impelling wave\*; but I don't remember he has any-where painted the defeat and rout of an army, under the image of a flood of waters, broken and dispersed by a storm.

MY purpose is not to institute any comparison between these writers, in this point; but barely to observe to the philological reader, once for all, that it is familiar with *David*, to couch such images in three words, as would, in the hands of *Homer*, be the materials of his noblest, most enlarged, and most dignified descriptions.

I SHALL mention two in this *Psalms*, and leave the application to the reader's breast.

\* I might mention many instances from the *Iliad*: but the reader will, I believe, be content with one, B. 4. v. 478. Mr. *Pope's* translation:

As when the winds, ascending by degrees,  
First move the whit'ning surface of the seas,  
The billows float in order to the shore;  
The wave behind rolls on the wave before;  
Till with the growing storm the deeps arise,  
Foam o'er the rocks, and thunder to the skies:  
So to the fight the thick battalions throng, &c.

VER. 12.

THEY (that is, all nations) *compassed me about like bees*—

THEY *are quenched as the fire of thorns* \*.

THE reader has here, in miniature, two of the finest images in *Homer*: which, if his curiosity demands to be gratified, he will find illustrated and enlarged in the second book of the *Iliad*. The first of them stands thus transcribed from Mr. Pope's translation :

—*The following host  
Pour'd forth in millions, darken all the coast.  
As from some rocky cleft, the shepherd sees  
Clustering in heaps on heaps, the driving bees;  
Rolling and black'ning, swarms succeeding  
                        swarms;  
With deeper murmurs, and more hoarse alarms:  
Dusky they spread, a close embody'd croud;  
And o'er the vale descends the living cloud:  
So from the tents and ships, &c.*

Ver. 209, &c.

THE next is in the same book, Ver. 534, &c.

*As on some mountain, thro' the lofty grove,  
The crackling flames ascend, and blaze above;  
The fires expanding, as the winds arise,  
Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies:*

\* The reader will please to observe, that these images are, by a notorious blunder in the translator of the reading *Psalms*, connected as if they were but one.

So

*So from the polish'd arms, and brazen shields,  
A gleamy splendor flash'd along the fields.  
Not less their number, &c.*

THE candid reader will observe, that here the idea of an army's resembling a flaming fire, is common both to *Homer* and *David*: but the idea of that fire being quenched (when the army was conquered) is peculiar to *David*.

## C H A P. X.

DAVID *attempts to remove the Ark to Sion: and at last succeeds.*

WHAT the consequences of these two total defeats of the *Philistine* confederates were, is no-where explicitly related in Scripture: more than this, that *the fame of David went out into all lands, and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations.* The great victories which GOD had given him, by so signal an interposition in his favour, naturally tended to strike a terror of him into all the nations, far and near; and it is reasonable to believe, that the first effect of it was, the flight of the *Philistines* from those *Israelite* cities, which they had seized, upon the death of *Saul*: and that the *Israelites* gained at least as much by these conquests, as they lost by the defeat of *Gilboa*. For we find soon after, that *David was at rest from all his enemies round about*; and it



is not *natural* to believe, that he could be at rest before he had recovered all those *Israelite* cities, which the *Philistines* had possessed themselves of, after that defeat.

WE learn from the xiiiith chapter of the first book of *Chronicles*, that as soon as *David* was in quiet possession of the fort of *Sion*, the first consultation he held with the representatives of his people, was, about removing the *ark* from *Kirjath-jearim* to *Sion*. *David* well understood, of what infinite importance it was, to have an authentic symbol, and sure pledge, of the divine presence, deposited in his capital, to which to have solemn and public recourse, upon all emergencies, and great occasions.

SAUL was not blessed with this right way of thinking, which the people well knew. However, *David*, in his exhortation to them on this occasion, guards against all censure of that prince; and only puts them in mind, that they had not, for some time past, been so solicitous as they ought, to secure to themselves this blessing: *For* (says he) *we inquired not at it in the days of Saul*, as if the guilt of that omission were rather to be placed to their own account.

THE assembly agreed to the proposal, with one consent; and when GOD, upon an humble application made to him by the high-priest, concurred with them, a resolution was taken, to summon all the *priests* and *Levites*, and principal men of the whole nation, to attend the solemnity, at a time appointed. And the nature

ture and reason of the thing incline me to believe, with the very learned primate *Usher*, that it was on the ensuing sabbatical year.

SO much was *David's* heart set upon this point, that it appears from the 132d *Psalms*, that, upon the taking of *Sion*, he had made a solemn vow to GOD, not to take so much as one night's rest, nay not so much as to put his foot within his doors, till he had fixed upon a proper place, on which to deposit the tabernacle of GOD.

THE providence of GOD had no sooner settled him in his kingdom, than he took a solemn resolution of settling the service of GOD in it; well knowing, that purity and sincerity in his worship was the best and only sure stay of his own power, and his people's prosperity. A resolution truly wise! and worthy the father of that blessed Redeemer (according to the flesh) who commanded in his Gospel, *Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and his righteousness, and all these (inferior, earthly) things shall be added unto you*: and, accordingly, this, as I now observed, was the principal and express purpose of the first convention of his people, to remove and settle the ark at *Sion*; and with that the worship of GOD, in all its solemnity.

BUT, before the time appointed for this purpose arrived, the *Philistines*, and neighbour nations, made the confederacy and incursions related in the last chapter.

As soon as these were over, *David*, in pursuance of the resolution before agreed to with  
his

his people, again summoned all *Israel*, the princes and rulers of the people, with the *priests* and *Levites*, from *Sihor of Egypt* to *Hemath*, that is, from the *Nile* to the fountains of *Jordan*, to attend this great solemnity : And from this summons we may occasionally conclude, that all this tract of country was now in the possession of *Israel*.

ACCORDINGLY the high-priest, chief priests, princes, rulers, and leaders of every tribe, in a word, the nobility, clergy, and magistracy of the whole kingdom, assembled in one body, to the number of thirty thousand men : and *David*, attended by the nobility\* of *Judah*, marched at their head, to bring up the *ark* from *Kirjath-jearim* ; that *ark*, which was peculiarly distinguished and dignified by the name of the *ark of God*, whose name is called by the *Name of the Lord of hosts*, that dwelleth between the *cherubims*.

THIS, I think, may fairly be considered, as the noblest assembly that was ever convened, and met together, in any nation : and we shall form some notion of it, if we suppose the king of *Great Britain*, at the head of the whole nobility of the realm, all the archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters of the church, all the choirs of all the cathedrals of his dominions, doubled ; all the judges, benchers, and serjeants of the law, all the representatives of the people in parliament, all the civil magistracy of the kingdom, and all the officers of the

\* So the text should be rendered, 2 *Sam.* vi. 2. The vulgate says, *The men of Judah*.



militia, fleet, and army, with all the ensigns and ornaments of their several orders and professions, regularly assembled, and formed into one solemn procession.

WHEN they arrived at *Kirjath-jearim*, they placed the *ark* of GOD upon a new cart; and brought it forth from the house of *Abinadab*, from the eminence on which it had been deposited, and on which it had now rested about ninety years (according to the chronology of the Bible): and *Uzzah* and *Abio*, the sons of *Abinadab*, drive the cart; the king attending upon it, with his harp in his hand. *And David*, (says the text) *and all the house of Israel, played before the Lord, with all their might, on all manner of instruments made of fir-wood, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cornets, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.*

THUS they proceeded for a considerable space; but their festivity was, after some time, sadly interrupted. For, when they came to *Nachon's* threshing floor, the oxen, now possibly an hungred, and smelling their wonted food, seem to have grown unruly. Thus much is certain, they shook the *ark*. *And Uzzah* (says the text) *put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.*

THE action was well intended, but it was an action strictly prohibited by GOD, upon pain of death, and accordingly punished as it deserved. *And the anger of the Lord* (saith the text) *was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there, for his error; and there he died, by the*  
ark

*ark of God*, He erred, but it was from a gross neglect of inquiring into his duty; his error was vincible, and therefore punished as voluntary.

THE *rabbins* tell us, that the death inflicted upon *Uzzah* was, by tearing off the rash arm, which he had extended to the *ark*; which, if the muscles were torn away with it, must necessarily make an opening, that is, a *breach*, into the cavity of his body. This account they probably derive from some tradition; which however, is not ill supported by the text; which tells us, that *David was displeas'd, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah* in memory of which, *he called the name of the place Perez-Uzzah, that is, The breach of Uzzah, unto this day*. And it is a fair presumption, or rather, a fair inference, that the name was conferred with strict propriety to the occasion.

I OWN it is matter of astonishment to me, how *David*, and all the priests and people, could fall into so great an error, and deviate so strangely from the plain precepts of the law of GOD in this point; which expressly prohibited any but the priests, to touch the *ark*, upon pain of death, (*Numb. iv. 5, 15.*) and any but the *Levites* to carry it\*. The best apology that can be made for it, is, that *David* now succeeded to the throne, after a long irreligious reign; in which the *ark*, and every thing relating to it, were utterly neglected; especially after the massacre of all those priests, whose pe-

\* To carry even any part of the tabernacle, *Numb. i. 51*,  
culiar

cular business it was to attend the tabernacle (all but one young man); and who were, in all probability, the only priests of that realm, that had ever seen it, or knew any thing of its rituals: and there was not then (probably) any one priest or *Levite* alive, who had ever seen it removed. In short, the public worship of God had long been discouraged and neglected in *Israel*; and, with that, the study of the Scriptures, except so much as was absolutely necessary for the administration of the civil affairs of the state. (Would to God *Israel* were the only nation, upon which this sad truth could at any time be pronounced!)

ADD to all this, that *David* and his people had now been for many years immersed in wars; and the voice of religion, as well as reason, is often drowned in the din of arms.

IT is true, the *Philistines* had, about ninety years before, removed the *ark* with impunity, (1 *Sam.* vi. 7.) in the same manner as the *Israelites* did now: but they forgot, that what was pardonable in a *Philistine*, who knew no better, might be highly criminal in an *Israelite*. And surely there cannot be a stronger instance of the proneness of *Israel* to imitate the manners of their neighbours, in every thing relating to religion, than this profane imitation of the practice of the *Philistines*, in neglect of the express precepts of their duty. And, as all veneration of that sacred repository of the commands of God had long been lost and forgotten among the people, nothing less than so  
signal



signal a judgment from heaven, upon the profanation of it, was sufficient to recover a proper reverence of it in their hearts.

THE signal vengeance of GOD, upon the profane temerity of *Uzzah* on this occasion, struck *David*, and his people, into a strange consternation; and the king was in terror what to do, or how to conduct himself, how to carry the *ark* to his own house in the city of *David*. In this fear he resolved to defer the further removal of it, till he was some way or other better informed: and in the mean time deposited it in the house of *Obed-edom* the *Gittite*, a *Levite* of *Gath-rimmon*, a *Levitical* city in the tribe of *Dan*, *Josh. xxi. 23, 24.*

HERE it continued three months; during which time, it pleased GOD to *blefs* *Obed-edom*, and all his household, and all that pertained to him, in a remarkable manner: but how, or in what particulars, is not said, nor shall I take upon me to conjecture.

THIS signal prosperity of *Obed-edom*, since his reception of the *ark*, being reported to *David*, he again summoned the chiefs of the kingdom, in order to remove it to his own palace in *Sion*; and in the mean time took care to inform himself particularly, from the law of GOD, how and in what manner it ought to be removed. There he learnt\*, that the priests only were to approach it, upon pain of death; and to lay on its three coverings in a regular order; first, *the covering veil*; secondly, *the covering*

\* *Numb. iv.*

of badgers skins; and thirdly, over that, a cloth wholly of blue: and when they had done this, and put in the staves thereof, then the sons of *Kobath* might approach to bear it: but (says the text) *they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.*

WHEN the priests and *Levites* were thoroughly instructed in all the parts and circumstances of their duty, and distinguished into their several classes and offices, *David* then composed the xxivth psalm, set it to music, and gave it, with all its parts, vocal and instrumental, to *Chenemiah* chief of the *Levites*, his master of the song; who was to instruct the several performers in their parts, vocal and instrumental.

THE instruments mentioned in the sacred text, to be made use of on this occasion, are psalteries, harps, cymbals, cymbals of brass, psalteries on *alamoth*, harps on the *shaninith*, cornets, and trumpets.

THEN *David* prepared robes of fine linen, as it is translated, but in reality of *byssus*, that is, fine white rich silk, for all the *Levites* that attended the *ark*, to the number of eight hundred and sixty-two; and when they were all properly prepared and sanctified (as he expressly enjoined they should) for that sacred office, he then put off his royal robes; and, assuming the character of an humble attendant on the *ark* of GOD, he put on a long robe of the same kind with those worn by the *Levites*, and over that a linen ephod, which, according to the best critics,

tics, was a short vesture or tunic, (without sleeves) reaching down below the middle of the thigh, and open on the sides, like a rochet, with a long girdle annexed, hanging from behind the neck, (not unlike an officer's sash) then crossing the body beneath the breasts, and returned round the loins, then closely tied before, and both the ends of it hanging down as low as the long robe\*.

WHEN the ark was lifted up, *David*, in this dress, led the procession; the order of which is thus far set forth, *Psalms* lxxviii. 25, &c. *The singers went before, (David at their head) the players upon instruments after; in the midst, (that is, between both) the damsels, playing with timbrels.* Then followed (as I humbly apprehend) the several congregations, that is the several tribes, with their princes, elders, &c. for this I take to be the meaning of that expression, (verse 27.) *the princes of Judah, and their council, &c.*

WHEN *David* found, upon the ark's being carried a few (six) paces, that the work prospered in their hands, *when God* (says the text)

\* I am sensible, that some very superficial and conceited men have blundered egregiously upon this head, confounding the girdle and the ephod, as if the ephod were nothing but a girdle; whereas there are no two things in the sacred writings (nor in any writings under heaven) more clearly distinguished than the ephod and the girdle. Thus, *Exod.* xxviii. 4, 6, 8. *These are the garments which they shall make, a breast-plate, and an ephod, &c. and a girdle, &c. and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, &c. and the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, &c.* And the same distinction is again repeated, *Exod.* xxxix. 2, &c.



*helped the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, they sacrificed seven bullocks and seven rams.* Some have imagined from this text, that *David* had erected altars at this interval, throughout the whole length of the procession; an opinion, as I humbly apprehend, not sufficiently founded in the text: though the distribution of flesh, at the close of the solemnity, demonstrates that an infinity of sacrifices was made upon this occasion.

DAVID'S joy increased, as the procession happily went on: GOD had filled his heart with gladness, and he was not ashamed to shew it, in all the genuine effects and expressions of transport; singing, and shouting, and leaping, and dancing before the LORD, according as the various measures of the music inspired and directed, till he arrived at the tabernacle, and fixed the *ark* in its place.

LET the xxiv<sup>th</sup> *Psalms* be considered, as composed and set to music upon this occasion, and sung in the procession (as almost all commentators agree it was, and the tenor of the psalm manifests it to have been). It is undoubtedly written in the way of dialogue, and must as undoubtedly have been sung in the same manner. Let *Jerusalem* then, the city of GOD, be considered as an emblem of heaven (as undoubtedly it was by the *Jews*); the court of the tabernacle, the region of GOD'S more immediate residence; the tabernacle, his palace; and the *ark*, his throne: let this be considered, and the most ordinary and inattentive reader

cannot fail to be struck with the beauty and sublimity of the composition, and its propriety to the occasion.

LET the king be supposed to begin the concert, with a solemn and sonorous recitative of these sentences.

KING.

*The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is! the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein.*

LET the chorus of vocal music then take up the song, and sing the same words, in a more tuneful and elaborate harmony; then let all the instruments, and whole chorus of the people, fall in with them. And indeed there is reason to believe from the text, that the whole body of the people that made up the procession, were instructed upon this occasion: *And David, (says the text) and all Israel with him, played upon all manner of instruments, &c.*

LET the chorus be then divided, each singing in their turns, (and both joining in the close) *For he hath founded it upon the seas, and prepared it upon the floods.*

LET this part of the music be supposed to have lasted till the procession reached the foot of the hill of *Sion*, or near it; then let the king be presumed to have slept forth, and begun again, in a sweet and solemn tone:

KING.

KING.

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall rise up in his holy place?*

SINGERS, 1st CHORUS.

*Even he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.*

2d CHORUS.

*That hath not lift up his mind unto vanity, nor  
sworn to deceive his neighbour, &c.*

LET this part of the music be supposed to have lasted till they reached the gates of the city.

THEN the king began again, in that most sublime and heavenly strain —

KING.

*Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift  
up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of  
glory shall come in.*

ALL.

*Lift up your heads, ye gates &c.*



PERSONS appointed to keep the gates\*.

*Who is the King of glory?*

1st CHORUS.

*It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the  
Lord mighty in battle.*

2d CHORUS.

*It is the Lord strong and mighty, &c.*

ALL.

*He is the King of glory; he is the King of  
glory.*

AND now let us suppose the instruments to take up the same airs, (the king, the princes, and the matrons, moving to the measure) and continue them to the gates of the court of the tabernacle.

THEN let the king again begin :

KING.

*Lift up your heads, ye gates, &c.*

AND be followed and answered as before.

\* Or perhaps the matrons of *Jerusalem* meeting him there, as they did *Saul* upon his return from the *Philistine* conquest, 1 *Sam.* xviii.

ALL

ALL closing—instruments founding, chorus singing, people shouting,

*He is the king of glory.*

How others may think upon the point, I cannot say (nor pretend to prescribe); but for my own part, I have no notion of hearing, or of any man's ever having seen or heard, any thing so great, so solemn, so celestial, on this side the gates of heaven\*.

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C H A P. XI.

*The conclusion of the Procession of the Ark. Mr. Bayle's Censure of DAVID's Dancing and Dress, considered.*

**B**EING now come to the close of this pro-  
cession, give me leave to add, before I proceed further, that this procession was not (as some commentators have strangely mistaken it) in any wise military, but intirely and securely pacific, and is indeed a fine comment upon *David's* intire reliance and implicit confidence in the protection of Almighty God, grounded upon that repeated command to his

\* Need I caution the reader, that I say this neither of the *Jewish* ritual, nor any ceremonial of the law, but merely of this particular procession, and form of devotion, celebrated in the circumstances now related?

people, that all their males should appear thrice every year before the LORD, in the place that he should chuse; and that amazing promise annexed, that no man should invade their land, or assault their cities, when they were so deserted of their defenders: *Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year* (Exod. xxxiv. 24.).

IF it be objected, that *David* had just subdued his enemies, and therefore might now be secure of not being assaulted by them;

— I ANSWER, that the resolution of making this procession was taken in a general assembly of his people, before he had subdued, or even warred with them, (1 *Chron.* xiii.) and very soon after he had provoked them, by taking the strong fort of *Sion*; so that if they had waited but a few weeks, they might have invaded him in the very time of this procession, when it was easy for them, with their multitudes, to have stormed an hundred of his cities in one day, or rather possessed themselves of them without resistance: but God's unconquerable promise stood in the way; nor is there one instance of any attempt made upon the people of GOD, by any one of their enemies, in this annual desertion of their cities, from the earliest æra of their history. And doubtless this was one reason why the sacred historians are so very express and particular in relating all the circumstances of this procession, which demonstrated it to be wholly paci-



pacific, and which, for that reason, fills up more space in the sacred page, than the descriptions of many battles, and the defeats of mighty enemies.

I REMEMBER but two religious processions of note in the accounts of the heathen world; neither of which, however, in my humble opinion, deserves to be once mentioned with this. The first is, that of *Alcibiades*\*, in which he conducted and protected the priests, in the celebration of the great mysteries in honour of *Minerva*; but by no means in the manner that *David* conducted his procession, but quite otherwife, in a most magnificent military apparatus; which gained him as much reputation, and more esteem, than any of his military achievements. And the next is, a procession of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, in honour of *Bacchus*, particularly described by *Athenæus*, (l. 5.) in which *Satyrs* and *Sileni*, that is, lewdness and drunkenness, and other abominable emblems, richly and pompously arrayed, and crowned in the splendor and magnificence of monarchs, made up the principal and most distinguished part of the pomp. In one word, it were hard to determine, which was most predominant in that procession, the folly, the extravagance, the vain vaunt of wealth, or the ostentatious and impious embellishments and triumph of vice.

\* See *Plutarch's* Life of *Alcibiades*.

BUT to return :

WHEN the *ark* of GOD was deposited in its place, *David* and his people offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before GOD; but of what kind, and in what numbers, is no-where said; but if we may guess from the subsequent practice of *Solomon*, upon the removal of the *ark* into the temple, in which, as I apprehend, he transcribed pretty nearly the example of his father, the sacrifices must have been very numerous, and of the most valuable kinds.

AFTER the sacrifices followed the psalm, recited at length 1 *Chron.* xvi. expressly said to be on that day, first delivered to *Asaph*, and his brethren, to thank the Lord: and that it was sung also upon that occasion, appears evidently from these concluding words, *And all the people said, Amen; and praised the Lord.*

IN this psalm, after *David* hath exhorted the people to praise and to give thanks to GOD, for his peculiar mercies to them there recited, he then breaks out into a rapture of gratitude, in contemplation of the infinite bounty and benignity of the Creator; and calls upon the whole creation, to fill up the chorus of his praise:—  
*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name.*  
 —*Bring an offering, and come before him.*  
 —*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*  
 —*Fear before him, all the earth.*—*The world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.*  
 —*Let the heaven be glad, and the earth rejoice; and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth.*—*Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.*—*Let the fields rejoice, and all that*

*is therein: then shall the trees of the wood sing out in the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.*

HE then returns to his own people—*O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever:—*and concludes with those words, which I humbly apprehend to be the form in which he blessed, that is, prayed for his people (first calling upon them to join with him in the prayer); *And say ye—Save us, O Lord our Salvation, and gather us together\*. and deliver us from the Heathen; that we may give thanks unto thy holy Name, and glory in thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen; and praised the Lord.*

WHEN *David* had blessed the people, *he dealt* (saith the text) *to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine* (1 Chron. xvi. 3.); not to the princes, elders, and principal persons concerned in the procession only, but *to every one of Israel*. And to put it out of all doubt, that the whole of the people is here meant *by every one*, we are told, 2 Sam. vi. 19. *that he dealt among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, &c.*

IT was now, as I humbly apprehend, the feast of tabernacles. That it was at some of the three

\* For some of them were yet mixed, and dwelt in the same cities with the Heathen,



feasts, is, I think, out of all doubt; for, since the people were bound to come to *Jerusalem* upon all these feasts, it is not credible, that *David* would put them to the trouble and expence of coming thither unnecessarily, when the *ark* might as well be removed at any of the solemn feasts, as at any other time; and that it was now removed at the feast of tabernacles, I conclude, (I think not irrationally) because it was confessedly in that feast that *Solomon* afterwards removed the *ark* into the temple\*; and there is no reason to imagine, he would swerve from the example of his father, in that point.

2dly, Because it was a little more than three months distance (four at most) from the former feast, on which *David* first attempted to remove the *ark*; which I apprehend was the feast of weeks; because the feast of tabernacles is the only feast that answers to this distance from the feast of weeks, or from any other.

THE houses of *Judea* are well known to have been flat-roofed; and as it was customary with the *Jews* to erect tents on the tops of their houses on other occasions, it is natural to think they did so on those times, in which they were obliged by the law to live in booths and tents, in memory of their having done so whilst they wandered through the wilderness.

THAT they dwelt thus, at the celebration of this feast, in the time of *Nehemiah*, is expressly said; and it is more rational to think they did

\* 2 *Chron.* v. iii. which feast he is expressly said, ch. vii. ver. 8. to have kept seven days.

so in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, when these feasts were much more crowded, and consequently the people more streightened for room.

TAKING it for granted then, that *Nehemiah* did no more in this point, than imitate the ancient usage of his country, we learn from him, that the custom was, to erect bowers of evergreens of various kinds, on the tops of their houses, at the beginning of the feast, and to dwell in them to the end of it. They also erected bowers in ranges throughout the larger streets of the city (*Nehem. viii.\**) Now, to me, a city regularly built, the palace in the centre, crowned with bowers, and all the streets shooting out regularly from it, adorned in the same manner, the city in the centre of many fruitful hills encompassing it like a amphitheatre, and

\* It is true we are there told, ver. 17. that they had *not done so*, that is, they had not celebrated that feast in the same manner, since the days of *Josbua* the son of *Nun*, an expression which no commentator can make any thing of, and which I take, with great submission to better judgments, to be a corruption crept into the text; first, because no such feast is recorded to have been kept by *Josbua*, tho' it cannot be doubted that many such were. 2dly, Because the feast of tabernacles was kept not long before by *Ezra*, (*Ezra* iii. 4.) and doubtless as the law directed; and before that, to a demonstration, by *Solomon* (1 *Kings* viii. 65, 66. 2 *Chron.* vii. 6, 8, 9, 10.) and in booths or tents; for the word which we render *booths*, *Pagnin*, in the margin of the Bible, renders *tabernacula*, tents; and therefore the original reading I humbly apprehend to have been *since the days of Josiah*; and it is certain, that since his days the law had never, that we know of, been read in so public a manner to the whole body of the people at this feast, as it was now by *Nehemiah*. To put *Josbua* for *Josiah* was an easy and a natural error; and when *Josbua* was once got into the text, the son of *Nun* was an easy addition.

these

these also covered with tents and bowers, must form one of the most beautiful landscapes the human imagination can conceive; especially by night, when an infinite number of lights, glimmering through the branches, exhibited, as it were, so many moons breaking from behind a cloud; and how must the humane heart of him that beheld this be dilated with joy, when he saw the city in that situation afterwards described by *Isaiah*! *Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody*; when he considered all these bowers, filled with people, happy in the conscience of having discharged their duty towards GOD, and rejoicing after it\*! But infinitely happier he, who could say to himself, I am, under GOD, the fountain of all this felicity!

HAPPY that prince, far happy beyond the common fate of kings, I had almost said, beyond the lot of mortals, whose people's piety is the effect of his instruction and example, and their genuine unpolluted joy the fruit of his bounty!

\* It may be urged, that feasts of this kind are very liable to corruption and abuse; like our wakes and revels, which were confessedly religious ceremonies at the first, although now far otherwise. I own the case may (I had almost said must) be so in all promiscuous assemblies of the sexes; but the reader will please to observe, that none but the males of *Israel* were obliged to attend these solemn festivals of the *Jews* †. It is true, women mixed in this procession of the ark; they danced in public, but I am satisfied they feasted only in their private families. This appears sufficiently from the text, inasmuch as the distribution of flesh and wine was not to any number of both, in common, but to *each* man, and *each* woman, in particular.

† *Exod.* xxiii. 27. *Deut.* xvi. 16.



CRASSUS is celebrated in the accounts of antiquity, for entertaining the people of *Rome* at ten thousand tables in one day. The whole people (that is, the whole body of the denizens, inhabitants) of *Rome*, in its most flourishing estate, never equalled one half, perhaps not one tenth part, of the people of *Israel*. The adult males of *Israel* at this time may moderately be estimated at a million and an half, and the inadult at nearly double that number. They were all, as the law obliged them\*, assembled at *Jerusalem* at this time, (lodged in the city, and surrounding region) together with their servants, and an infinite number of matrons, whose care and attendance upon their children was absolutely necessary, besides all those who inhabited the city, and all those whom curiosity drew thither on this great occasion : so that the glory of *David's* bounty on this occasion, seems to have held an higher proportion to that of *Crassus*, than the fame of his prowess to that of *Saul* ; *Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands ; Crassus feasted his myriads, David his millions.* Can you deny him to be, in this instance, *the man after God's own heart* ? Whom else, or what else, could he imitate in this act of unexampled beneficence, but the bounty of that Being, who *openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness* ?

WHEN *David* had blessed his people, and distributed a plentiful dole to each of them,

\* *Deut.* xvi. 16.

the text tells us, *they all departed, every one to his house, family, or place, or tent*; for so the original word signifies, and so, I humbly apprehend, it should have been translated in this place. They might go each to their tent; but it was impossible they could go each to his own house, on that day, as *David* did; for the sacred text informs us, that he returned from blessing his people, *to bless his household*, and no doubt to share with them in the joy of that glorious solemnity so happily accomplished. But, before he reached his house, *Michal* his wife, in her impotence of rage and indignation, went out to meet him. She had seen from her window the whole order of the procession, as it entered and passed through the city, and her husband, in transport of joy, dancing and playing at the head of it, that is, playing upon his lyre, and dancing to the joyful measure of the music. The haughty daughter of the haughty *Saul* could not bear to see so great a king, divested of all his ensigns of royalty, and debased into an humble attendant upon the *ark*. In her opinion, his majesty suffered by such a demeanour, and his dignity was disgraced; and she vented her resentment in the bitterest reproaches her malice could invent, or rage suggest. *How glorious, says she, was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!*

THE vile insinuated reproach was absolutely false, and *David* knew, that all his people well knew it to be so; and therefore gave himself no trouble to refute it, but barely contented himself to retort to the only truth contained in it, *viz.* his having *uncovered*, that is, disrobed himself of royalty; a tacit consent, that he had done so indeed, but it was in honour of that GOD, who had preferred him to her father.

HIS answer, carefully attended to, in the original, is truly noble and majestic. *Michal's* reproach was, that *David* had uncovered himself *before handmaids*, &c. He answers (appealing to GOD for the purity and integrity of his intentions in that uncovering) *Before Jehovah—*which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel. Therefore will I play before Jehovah, and will be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight; and, of the handmaids which thou hast spoken of, (far from being lessened in their esteem by this humiliation to GOD) of them shall I be had in honour.

THIS was an answer truly worthy a great king, who knew so well how to unite the humility of a saint with the majesty of a monarch; but it was an answer, which, with all its propriety, and power of truth, seems to have had little influence upon the proud *Michal*: and possibly this was the ground of that reflection, subjoined to *David's* answer by the sacred penman, *Therefore Michal the daughter*  
of



400 *An Historical Account of* B. 2.  
*of Saul had no child until the day of her death.*

BUT, after all, suppose *David* had not been wholly acted in this point by religious motives, he very well understood, that it could noway misbecome a monarch, to mix with the public festivities of his people; and that popularity could in no other instance, better become him, than in sharing their pleasures without any shew of superiority. He very well understood, (as *Le Clerc* observes) that the more he acted a popular part among the *Hebrews*, the more he should endear himself to them; a principle better suited to *David's* prudence, than to *Michal's* pride; and such as the greatest monarchs have not been ashamed of owning: as *Tacitus* tells us, that *Augustus* the *Roman* emperor thought it civil to mix with the pleasures of his people; and therefore he readily became a spectator of the public shews.

POLICY taught *Augustus* to put himself upon a level with his people in their public festivities; piety taught *David*, that all men were upon a level in the solemnities of religion.

I KNOW no one passage in the sacred writings, which hath been made more the object of libertine reproach and ridicule, than this of *David's* dancing in the procession of the *ark*; and yet there are who have considered it as much, perhaps more than any of his revilers; with equal penetration, I will not presume to say, but possibly with more constant and repeated attention, which sometimes does as well, in the  
dry

dry drudgery of examining and comprehending plain facts. I will venture to go one step farther; there are who have considered it, perhaps, with more attention than falls to the share of our modern men of genius, those great lights, which have so dazzled the eyes of mankind, as to make them blind to the great truths of revelation; and yet have found nothing in it either to revile or ridicule.

MR. *Bayle* is worthily placed at the head of these libertine revilers: and here, methinks, the light arising to the candid reader, from Mr. *Bayle's* manner of treating this subject, will be a fair criterion, by which to estimate the justice, the wisdom, and the importance, of this favourite principle of modern free-thinkers, that ridicule is the test of true worth and excellence.

MR. *Bayle* discusses and distinguishes upon this point with his usual and much adored penetration; determining, that if *David* uncovered his nakedness, the action might pass for an ill one, morally speaking: but if he only made himself contemptible by his postures, and by not supporting the dignity of his character, it was but an imprudence.

HE then cautions the reader, with great gravity, to consider the occasion of these *capers*, and this excess of joy, &c.

HE next quotes a passage from a modern author, who endeavoured to justify the nakedness of *Francis of Assise*, by that of *David*; and concludes all, with that known candour which eminently reigns in all his reasonings relating to

*David, that it would be thought very strange all over Europe, if, upon a day of procession of the holy sacrament, kings should dance in the streets, without any thing but a little sash round the waste.*

I SHALL not insist, how inconsistent these decisions may be with some other parts of Mr. Bayle's conduct, or how ill-becoming the most industrious defender of Cynic impudence\* ; but barely observe to the candid reader, that this great genius hath discussed and determined upon this point, (of *David's* dancing) in the three characters of casuist, critic, and historian : May I presume, with due distance and submission, to inquire a little into his conduct under each of these characters? May I presume, in the first place, to submit it to the candid reader, whether a common casuist would not be apt to observe, in answer to the first of these decisions, (and I dare say the whole college of physicians, and society of surgeons, would be apt to support him in it) that uncovering the nakedness, simply, and as such, never was, nor can be, deemed an action morally evil ; and that, if it were so, no greatness of occasion, or goodness of intention, could justify it. And therefore the decisions of this great genius upon this point, (with very great submission to his admirers) far from bringing any new light into the world, tend only to destroy what it had be-

\* See Mr. Bayle's *Diogenes* and *Hipparchia*, and the note annexed.



fore, and to no purpose; inasmuch as they neither justify *David*, nor condemn him.

LET me be allowed to observe, in the next place, that, if the case of *Francis of Assise* was parallel to that of *David*, methinks this acute observer should have told us so; and, if it was not, surely this accurate distinguisher, and lover of truth, should have shewn the difference. Every reader has a right to this, in a work intitled, *critical and historical*. Mr. *Bayle* has done neither: What new light then arises to the reader from this vein of ridicule; or, what are we to conclude, either in honour of Mr. *Bayle's* accuracy, or integrity, from this conduct?

As to his last representation of *David*, under the image of an *European* prince, dancing naked in the procession of the sacrament, without any thing but a little sash about the waist, I own I am utterly at a loss what to say to it. There is indeed a most shameful image of indecency exhibited to the reader in this account of the matter. But most certainly it is not *David's*; nor known to the sacred writer.

It is very hard to be unprovoked with insults upon clear and sacred truths. I will not however indulge my indignation further, than by a serious appeal to the breast of every calm and candid reader, I had almost said, to Mr. *Bayle's* greatest admirers, whether they would hesitate, one moment, to pronounce this conduct, in any other man, and upon any other subject, either the effect of such gross igno-

rance, and unpardonable inattention to the sacred writings, or such mean malice, and stupid buffoonry, as rendered it equally beneath refutation and abuse.

HAD Mr. *Bayle* read no more in the sacred story, but that *David was girded with a linen ephod*, could he naturally have concluded from thence that he was naked; or would the direct contrary have been the natural inference? Suppose the *ephod* (against the clearest demonstration to the contrary) to be nothing but a sash, there is no instance or suspicion of its ever having been worn alone. The use of it, as of all other sashes, must be to bind, and keep succinct, the robe it surrounded; so that the phrase of being *girded with a linen ephod*, far from implying nakedness, plainly implies a vesture; and what that vesture was, and what other vesture it covered, hath been already shewn. And be the care with which the sacred writers have guarded against any just ground of reproach upon *David*, on this head, or least suspicion of indecency, (but in the reproaches of his wife) for ever adored!

WHEN the sacred text informs us, that *Doeg* slew in one day *fourscore and five persons that wore a linen ephod*, did it ever enter into any man's head to imagine, that he slew fourscore and five men, (aged and venerable priests) that went stark-naked, all but a little sash about the waist?

WHEN the sacred writer informs us\*, that

\* 1 Sam. ii.

Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod, was it ever imagined, that he ministered stark-naked, all but a little sash about the waist? not to insist, that his mother might then have spared herself the trouble of bringing him his annual coat. There never was any public worship from the foundation of the earth, so guarded against any degree of nudity or indecency in the administration of it, as that of the *Aaronic* priesthood: besides *the long robe, the broidered coat, the ephod, and the girdle of the ephod*, which was to bind all, and keep them tight and succinct, they were obliged to wear linen breeches, to cover their nakedness; which, from the best accounts of them, nearly resembled those now in use; 'bating, that they had no opening, (either before or behind) and were tied round the loins, with a running string\*. These the priests wore, and were prohibited, upon pain of death, to approach the altar, or minister in the holy place, without them (*Exod. xxviii. 42, 43.*). Was it hard to perceive the further purpose, and full extent, of

\* I am sensible, that some critics have imagined from G O D's commanding *Moses, Exod. xx. 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon*, that the breeches appointed for *Aaron*, and his sons, were such as could not hide their nakedness from those that stood below them, when they ministered upon the altar. But this is the effect of great inattention: for this precept respects only such altars as should be built (and at least one such was built, *Exod. xxiv. 4.*) before proper cloathing was prepared for *Aaron*, and his sons. That it respected no other altar, is, I think, evident to a demonstration, inasmuch as the altar of G O D's own peculiar appointment and designing had steps, *Ezek. xliiii. 17.* and consequently his priests a proper covering, which effectually hid their nakedness.



this precept? especially when the expression rendered in the *English* translation, to *minister in the holy place*, is in the original, *to minister in holiness*.

DAVID now ministered in a sacred solemnity; he so far put himself into the priests habit, as to wear the *ephod*, its robe, and its girdle. Is it to be imagined he would omit the only part of that dress, which could not be omitted in the ministrations of sacred things, but upon penalty of death?

UZZAH had lately been struck dead before his eyes, for an error, seemingly of less consequence, in his ministry upon the *ark*. It is evident, that this made *David* study the whole ceremonial of removing it, with great care. Did he study it only to insult it, at the hazard of his own life? Let Mr. *Bayle* believe this, if he can; for my part, I cannot.

I CANNOT help quoting upon this occasion, an expression, which fell from a gentleman of my acquaintance, a little too much heated in dispute with a frivolous conceited antagonist; *Man, though born to misery, was never forced upon a more vexatious task, than to reason against ribaldry.*

NEED I add, after all this, that, when princes, or other persons, put off their robes of state, did it ever enter into the idea of such an unrobing, that they stript themselves stark-naked? And therefore though we had not been told, that *David* put on a robe of *byssus* on this occasion, and girded it with a *linen ephod*, I *Chron.* xv. 27.

and

and though we had no reason to believe, that he added any other part of the priestly dress, we should rationally have concluded, that, upon stripping off his regal robe, his under-garments continued the same as before; nor should we have hastily believed, that any-man in his senses would, at his time of life, (turned of forty years) and in that cool season, which succeeds autumn, strip himself stark-naked. If no regard to decency, yet, surely, a common care of health, would forbid this.

BUT, after all, the stripping off of his regal robes might sufficiently justify *Michal's* expression of his *uncovering himself*; as hath been shewn in the first part of this history.

UPON the whole, the candid reader is intirely referred to his own judgment, whether he will from henceforth consider Mr. *Bayle*, in this account of *David*, under the character of an honest and judicious writer of *an historical and critical dictionary*, or a negligent and inattentive examiner of truth, and shameless vender of ribaldry.

GIVE me leave to add, that the rude revileings of *Michal*, and railleries of Mr. *Bayle*, will be a monition to thinking men, how they hastily admit either the dictates of proud wrath, or dull drollery, for real truths.

## C H A P. XII.

*A Digression, containing a short Inquiry, in what Part of the City of DAVID the Ark was deposited.*

WHEN David had deposited the ark of the covenant of the Lord in its place, the sacred historian relates, that he left there before it Asaph, and his brethren (to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required); and Obed-edom, with their brethren, threescore and eight; Obed-edom also, the son of Jeduthun, and Hofah, to be porters. And from hence, I think, we may date the establishment of the public liturgy of the Jews.

It may be thought a matter of more curiosity than use, to inquire, in what part of the city of Sion, David deposited the ark of the covenant; but I hope it will not long be so deemed; at least not by every reader.

THE city of Sion is in a peculiar manner intituled the city of GOD; and I humbly apprehend it to be so intituled, not only because God chose that city, in preference to all others, to place his name there; but because he kept his residence there, in a very peculiar and distinguished manner; in his tabernacle, as in his palace: which I apprehend to have been placed in a court, in the centre of David's palace, on the summit of Sion.

FIRST,



FIRST, Because, when *David* erected a new tabernacle to GOD at *Sion*, the original tabernacle of *Moses* was erected on *the high place* at *Gibeon*; whither he sent *Zadok* the priest, and his brethren, to attend it (*1 Chron. xvi. 39*). And I apprehend it was erected upon distinguished eminences, from the beginning; which gave rise to the custom of sacrificing upon *the high places*. This was document enough to *David*, not to give his tabernacle a less eminent situation at *Sion*.

SECONDLY, Because the example of GOD at *Sinai* would naturally lead *David* into this way of thinking: and it is certain, that when GOD descended in a cloud from heaven, upon mount *Sinai*, in the presence of all his people, he descended and rested upon the summit of the mount. (*Exod. xix. 20.*)

AND that *David* was in this way of thinking, is evident enough from the *lxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm*: where, speaking of the *ark*, and tabernacle, the presence-chamber of GOD, he says, *And the Lord is among them (Israel), as in the holy place at Sinai*; that is, GOD on the top of the mount, and the people at set bounds round about (*Exod. xix. 12.*). The only difference was, that here *he ascended on high*, (*Psalms xlvi. 18.*) and there he descended from on high.

THIRDLY, Because, when GOD commanded the people to bring their several offerings towards forming and furnishing the tabernacle, he adds, (*Exod. xxv. 8.*) *And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of*

of them\*. And again, (*Exod. xxix. 45.*) *I will sanctify the tabernacle, &c. and I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel †*; that is, in the midst of the tribes denominated from those sons; *Reuben, Simeon, &c.*

FOURTHLY, Because, (as the best comment upon this text) in all the marches and encampments of the sons of *Israel*, the court of the tabernacle was always situate in the centre of the tribes, and the tabernacle in the centre of the court; like the tent of the captain-general, (says *Lami*) in the midst of the army; three of the tribes to the east of it, three to the west, three to the north, and three to the south (*Numb. i. 53. Numb. ii.*). And to this, I apprehend, refers that passage in the *lxxvth Psalm*, ver. 6. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south ‡. But God is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* And it is certain, that the first election or promotion of the elders, that is, the princes of the people, into the great council, was by the immediate influence of the Spirit of GOD.

\* Which is thus very faultily rendered in the *English* translation; *And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.*

† This also is faultily translated, *among the children of Israel.*

‡ Here the prophet, rebuking the pride of the princes, let them know, that their exaltation in reality proceeded neither from the people, nor their own merits, but from GOD the centre and source of power; and therefore they should be humbled in his presence. *I said unto the fools—Deal not so foolishly—and to the wicked. Lift not up your horn: lift not up your horn on high, and speak not with a stiff neck; for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

FIFTHLY,

FIFTHLY, When the men of *Kirjath-jearim* brought the *ark* into their city, they deposited it in *the house of Abinadab in the hill* (probably the most eminent and distinguished situation in the city): which hill\*, saith *Beda*, overlooked and commanded the whole town, and was therefore a fit place for the *ark*, which was *quasi arx totius Israelis*, the beauty and bulwark of *Israel*; and is it to be imagined, that *David*, who was so remarkably solicitous (as was before observed) to find out a fit place for it, would be less careful to honour it with an advantageous situation, than the men of *Kirjath-jearim*? especially when it appears from many passages in the *Psalms*, that he considered GOD as the fortress or citadel, upon which, both his own safety, and that of his city, depended.

Is it possible to imagine, that all this had no meaning? that the example of GOD himself, and the practice of his people for so many ages, was matter of no instruction and direction to so wise and so religious a prince, in a point which he had so intirely at heart? Is this to be imagined, in a nation accustomed to be instructed by emblems from the beginning?

IN the last place, it appears evidently from the text, that, when *David* set about removing the *ark*, he proposed to remove it to himself; that is, his own dwelling in *Sion*: and it appears, with great evidence, that he dwelt in the fort; that is, the citadel: and, as the *ark* had the first place in his care, it is not in any degree to

\* This is Dr. *Trapp's* note.



be doubted, that it had the first place in his city, and in his citadel. The tabernacle, in *David's* estimation, was the palace of GOD (*Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in*): and it could be no doubt with *David*, whether the palace of GOD should have the pre-eminence. Nothing could be a more natural or obvious emblem of the power and superintendence of Almighty GOD over all his works, than an elevated situation of his tabernacle, his palace, and throne, over every thing that encompassed it.

THE inference from all this inquiry, is plain and short. *Jerusalem* was the centre of union to all the tribes; and to this plainly refers that passage in the cxxi<sup>d</sup> *Psalms*, *Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself. For thither the tribes go up to worship—There is the seat of judgment, &c. For my brethren and companions sake* (that is, for the common interest of the nation) *I will wish thee prosperity.*

JERUSALEM, the great seat and centre of religion and justice, was the centre of union to all the tribes; the palace, the centre of the city; and the tabernacle, of the palace.

BLESSED and happy is that nation, whose prince is the centre of union to his people; and GOD (that is, true religion) the common centre and cement both of people and prince!

THE indulgent reader will, I hope, pardon this digression, merely as it contains matter of some little curiosity. It is not very tedious, and it pretends not to be very important.

## C H A P. XIII.

*A Dissertation upon Dancing, in which DAVID'S Dancing before the Ark is examined, and vindicated.*

**I**T is well known, that *David's* dancing before the *ark* hath long been matter of loud laughter with the libertine world, and a kind of silent shame with commentators, and christian writers of all kinds; who seem to hang down their heads, as this procession of the *ark* passes, in confusion for the king of *Israel*; some of them, now-and-then, dropping a short word in his excuse; not one daring to publish one page in his vindication; and but one or two, that I know of, daring to quote one passage from any antient writer of note in his favour.

IN this situation of things, it may be thought a rash and arduous attempt, to adventure any vindication of his conduct on this point; and I have myself long thought it so; till much meditation upon the subject, and a more thorough and enlarged examination of the opinions and practice of the wisest and best men, in the wisest and best ages, added to the precepts of GOD himself upon the point, thoroughly reconciled me, not only to the reasonableness, but to the wisdom and virtue, of the practice; and encouraged me to offer my thoughts upon it, to the candid reader, in the natural order and arrangement,

ment, in which I found them, after long meditation, disposed in my mind.

IN the first place then, I found dancing mixed with the religious ceremonies of the *Jews*, from *Moses* to *David*; practised and enjoined by *David*, not reprov'd by *Moses*; practised by the most religious king, and by the sister of the best and most religious law-giver; and commanded, as I apprehend, by GOD himself\*. And therefore the only inquiry, that naturally fell in my way upon the point, was, to examine whether this appointment were of GOD. And the first question necessary to determine this, was, to inquire, whether the action was sufficiently grave and serious, or capable of being suited to the purposes of religion.

IN answer to this, I soon satisfied myself, that cheerfulness and gaiety of heart were, in many circumstances, as well suited to the purposes of religion, as the most solemn gravity; otherwise GOD would not so expressly, and so repeatedly, have commanded his people to rejoice in their religious solemnities before him.

IN the next place, that the procession of the *ark* was slow and solemn, is beyond all doubt: and the very order of the procession demonstrates it.

\* Inasmuch as the precept relating to this festival, the feast of tabernacles, *Deut. xvi. 14.* which we translate, *Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast*, is, in the letter of the original, *Thou shalt rejoice in thy dance*. And *David's* practice is, I think, the best comment upon the text; and, at the same time, no bad proof, that it was in this solemnity *David* danced; which he did not in the former.



THE singers and trumpeters went foremost ; and it is evident, that, if the procession had not been slow, (with proper rests for the music, and relieving the carriers of the *ark*) neither could the first find breath for their voices, nor the second for their instruments.

IN the next place, *David's* dancing and leaping are a proof of this : if the procession were not slow, he could find convenient place for neither. Now it is evident from the text, that his leaping was that kind of bounding and springing from the ground, which is so remarkable in the lamb and the deer : springing up high in air, and rising again upon the descent, as if the body rebounded from the earth by its own elastic force : an action requiring, and denoting, great activity and strength ; the most sprightly, playful, and pleasing of all animal motions ; and such as could not be exerted, but in the most erect and graceful attitude.

My next inquiry was, whether dancing any way tended to the happiness and well-being of mankind. Did it tend to make them healthful ? Did it tend to make them innocently joyful ? Could it tend to form their manners to piety and virtue ?

THAT dancing tends to the health of the whole human species, is confessed on all hands ? and capable of the plainest and most obvious proof : because, in the variety of its motions, actions, attitudes, and rests, it gives a more equable exercise to all the parts, muscles, nerves, and fibres of the body, than any other employ-

ment or amusement either of peace, or war. Now, more equable exercise gives more equable strength, and conveys more equable nourishment, to all the parts; and therefore better preserves them in proportion, activity, and vigour; the effects of which are, a better shape, a better complexion, a more easy motion, a more erect and graceful carriage\*, and a greater fitness for every exercise of peace, or war; and, of consequence, for every end of society. Thus far, then, the appointment is most certainly worthy of GOD.

IN the next place, dancing is a most natural expression of joy, and at the same time a natural fountain of joy; it raises the spirits beyond the power of wine, and diffuses festivity and alacrity throughout the whole frame; and, as nothing is more agreeable to the Creator, than the innocent felicity of his creatures, so nothing could at once better become his wisdom, and his goodness, than so to contrive his religious institutions, as to make his creatures find their felicity in their discharge of duty to him.

OUR third question is, whether dancing be capable of forming the manners to piety and virtue. And, in order to determine this, let me beseech the candid reader to suspend his prejudices for a few moments; and calmly to consider, that dancing is a science of imitation †, as

\* See this point, and every thing else relating to this subject, discussed more fully in Mr. *Burrette's* very learned *Memoires sur la danse*, &c. in the memoirs of the royal academy of sciences, vol. I.

† As *Aristotle* and *Plutarch* confess it to be; *Aristotle* in the beginning of his *Poetics*; and *Plutarch*, l. 9. of his *Symposiacs*.

music, poetry, and sculpture, are; and its principal purpose is, to represent to the life the actions of men; and express the several passions that agitate them, by graceful, measured motions\*: and consequently, this science of imitation is as capable as any of the rest, (perhaps more so) to be applied to the formation of the manners. And this is evident, even from the disrepute and disadvantage it hath fallen under, with the grave part of mankind, for some ages past. From whence did this arise, but from that corruption and looseness of manners introduced by the *pantomimes*, in their dances upon the public theatres of *Italy*; in which they imitated the lewd loves of their fabled divinities, and other abominations too vile to be mentioned? And therefore *Plato*, who honoured this science to so high a degree, carefully banished every kind of dance, that could so much as be suspected of an immoral tendency, from his commonwealth; such as those of the *Nymphs*, the *Egyptians*, the *Satyrs*, and *Sileni*; though introduced under the pretext of certain religious ceremonials and expiations. Strange expiations, that pollute where they should purify; and introduced as many abominations into *Greece*, as the *pantomimes* did into *Italy*? abominations which even *Tiberius* himself thought too de-

\* *Scaliger* gives this definition of it in the first book of his *Poetics*, cap. xviii. *Motus compositus, numerosus, cum gestu effingens rem aut personam, vel quam canit, vel quam tacet.*

And *Athenæus* tells us, that the sculptors of *Greece* carefully studied the actions of the dancers, to learn from them the most graceful attitudes that suited each passion.



testable to be endured in public; and therefore he banished the dancers from *Rome*; although this practice is well known to have been in high esteem there, in the better ages of the commonwealth.

THE *Salii* (the priests of *Mars*) were instituted by *Numa*, their wisest and most virtuous king; in whose ceremonials, the noblest men of the nation danced (as *Lucian* assures us) most gravely and religiously; of whom it is well known that *Scipio Africanus* the elder was one. But when the *pantomimes* introduced their corruptions, the practice fell into disgrace. This sufficiently accounts for *Domitian's* turning *Cæcilius Rufinus*\*, a man of *questorial* dignity, out of the *senate*, for being fond of dancing and gesticulation, says *Suetonius*; for *Cicero's* reproaching *Gabinus*, a consular man, with having danced; and saying, that *no sober man danced*. And the truth is, even drunkenness was a wretched excuse for such dancing, as *Rome*, fast degenerating, then endured. But these objections no more affect the science of dancing than the lewd tablets of *Tiberius* do the science of painting; which *Rubens*, *Raphael*, and many others, have sufficiently shewn to be capable of being redeemed from the vilest purposes, and applied to the noblest.

*SIMONIDES* used to say of dancing, that it was silent poetry; and of poetry, that it was eloquent dancing (*Plut. Sympos. lib. ix, c. 15.*)

\* So *Xiphilin* names him. *Suctonius* only says, *virum questorium*, &c.

It is evident from hence, that he considered dancing, as one of those sciences by which mankind might be instructed; as they were in a principal manner by poetry, for many ages: and had he considered dancing under the advantages both of verse and music, added to it, he had seen it in a much nobler and more instructive light. It is out of all doubt that virtue may be both taught and improved by painting; and does any man think, that virtue in dead colours is more affecting, animating, and inspiring, than virtue in living action; than virtue (as it were) in person? For example, — It is well known that the *Spartans* (who derived the origin of this science from their favourite divinities, (*Castor* and *Pollux*) marched to battle in certain movements, adjusted to the measures of martial sounds. Would the picture of *Cleomenes*, or *Leonidas*, leading his *Spartans* to battle, in a measured movement, (suppose it drawn to the life, by the pencil of *Apelles*) affect the spectators more, than the real hero, actually moving to the measure of martial sounds; now calling upon the gods, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, now clanging his shield, now shaking, and now poising his lance, as in act to dart it against the enemy; now springing forward to invade the foe, and now bounding back, or to either hand, to avoid his weapons? We may form some idea of this from what *Julius Scaliger* tells of himself, in the forecited chapter of his *Poetics*. He tells us, that in his youth he often danced that martial dance, called the

*Pyrrhic*, before the emperor *Maximilian*, to the astonishment of all *Germany*; and that the emperor was once so struck with his warlike activity, that he cried out, *This lad was either born in a coat of mail, instead of a skin; or rocked in one, instead of a cradle.*

THAT military virtue was taught and expressed by this practice, is, I think, evident from a passage in *Plutarch's Laconic* apophthegms: he tells us, that *Agésilas* the great, being asked, why the *Spartans* used pipes when they fought, answered, *That when all move in measure, the cowards and the courageous may be made manifest.* Picture speaks only to the eye; but dancing, accompanied with vocal and instrumental music, speaks to the eye, to the ear, to the soul; and to all these; in a variety of successive actions, attitudes, and accents, the most moving and interesting that it is possible to conceive. And, are all these powers of sound and motion applicable only to the interest of military virtue? GOD forbid?—They are equally applicable to the promotion of humility, piety, penitence, and full trust and confidence in the power and protection of Almighty GOD. It would otherwise follow, that none of these virtues could be either represented in picture, or personated in sculpture, or in life; a position foolish in itself, and false in fact. It is true, *David's* dancing upon the removal of the *ark* seems to have been expressive of joy and thanksgiving only; and, that properly effected, his end was answered. But, had he been called  
upon



upon to praise GOD in the dance upon other solemn occasions, I, for my own part, dare not say or surmise, that his dancing, I mean his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, might not have been as instructive and affecting, to all the purposes of piety, as his poetry and penitence. I do from my soul believe it might be more so, on this occasion of public and religious joy, than both; when all the powers of harmony, melody, measure, graceful action, and hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, were added to the natural force, energy, and sublimity of those noble compositions.

THE candid reader is, I hope, by this time fully convinced, that the institution of dancing, as a ceremonial of religion, was neither unwise, nor unworthy of GOD; no way unworthy the Fountain of felicity to appoint, or the man after GOD's own heart to practise — and I submit it to him, whether Mr. *Bayle*, in his sneers upon *David's* dancing, hath not justly drawn upon himself the same imputation of ignorance, rashness, and immodesty, which *Lucian* urges against *Croton*, for accusing *the very best thing in mortal life*, (so he rates the science of dancing) *and censuring what he did not understand.*

HAVING proceeded thus far, I next set myself to examine (more for the satisfaction of others, than my own) the judgment of antiquity upon this point.

AND here I cannot but observe, that I found a most surprising uniformity between the practice

of the people of GOD, and both the opinions, and practice of the wisest and most philosophic men of the heathen world in relation to this matter. With them also, I found its original deduced from heaven; some placing it under the presidency of the *Muses*; some making it coeval with the creation, and the great GOD of love; some deriving it from *Orpheus* and *Musæus*; others, from the later divinities of *Castor* and *Pollux*; and others from *Minerva*, the goddess of war and wisdom.

I FOUND it, after this, practised by the wisest nations, upon the most serious and solemn occasions; in their sacrifices, in their processions in honour of the gods, and in their marches against their enemies, invoking the aid of those gods. And *Strabo* tells us, (lib. x.) it was a custom common both to *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, to celebrate their sacrifices with festivity; some with enthusiasm, and some without, some with music, and some without. And *Lucian* expressly says, that, among the antients, no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement, was accounted rightly accomplished, without dancing (*de saltatione*, p. 504.).

ATHENÆUS also has gathered great authorities upon this head. I shall mention only four: Lib. i. p. 22. *Pindar*, says he, calls *Apollo* a dancer.

*The dancer king of splendor\*.*

\*— Ὀρχηστὰ ἀγλαίας ἀνάων.

AND *Homer*, or one of the *Homeridae*, in the hymns to *Apollo*\*,

*Graceful sustain and strike the sounding lyre,  
More graceful now, and lofty in thy gait!*

(One would imagine the poet had beheld *David* in the procession.) Nor did the antients (as he informs us) think dancing beneath the dignity even of *Jupiter*: of whom *Eumelus* the *Corinthian* says,

*Danc'd in the midst the Sire of gods and men †.*

He tells us also, (lib. xiv. pag. 628.) that there was a graceful and magnificent kind of dance in use with the *Athenian* chorus, of which *Socrates* says in one of his poems,

Οἱ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιπα θεῶς τιμῶσιν, ἀριστοὶ  
Ἐν πολέμῳ.——

*Who in the chorus honour best the gods,  
Are best in battle.*

I FOUND dancing also celebrated by the most ancient and venerable poets; I found high praises upon it, in the mouths of the ablest philosophers; with many serious precepts for the regulation of the practice; and reflections upon the use and importance of it, to the formation of the manners.

IN one word, I found it practised by the wisest men, by more than one of the greatest heroes, and by the most dignified monarch of all antiquity; and practised to this day, from

\* Φέρμιγγ' ἐν χεῖρασιν ἔχων χεεῖν κηθάειζε,  
Καλὰ καὶ ὑψὶ βιβᾶς——

† Μέγεσιν δ' ὠρχεῖτο Πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.



the earliest antiquity, by several nations of the east and south.

I THEN asked myself, Can all antiquity be mistaken and deluded in this point, from *Moses* to *Socrates*, and from *Socrates* to *Plutarch*? Would *Homer* have made a chorus of dancers an ornament of his hero's shield, and that ornament the work of a god\*? And would he elsewhere (*Odyss.* 1. 8.) have placed a chorus of dancers under the conduct and direction of the divine *Demodocus*, at once modulating their measures with his voice and lyre? And would *Hesiod* have made another chorus the ornament of the shield of *Hercules*, an hero and a demi-god, had dancing been below the regard of mortals?

IT is well known, from *Plato's* commonwealth, (b. iii.) that the *Egyptians* consecrated both music and dancing to the sole service of the gods, by a law, which they gloried to have subsisted amongst them from time immemorial (long before this world of ours had any being). Could not only they, but the *Spartans* also, *Athenians*, *Thessalians* †, and *Cretans* ‡, be mistaken, as one man, in this affair, in their wisest and most virtuous ages? Would *Cyrus*, the wisest, the most virtuous, the most venerable monarch of

\* *Iliad* 18.

† The *Thessalians* (says *Lucian*) gave the rulers and leaders of the people the title of *præsultores*, that is, *dance-leaders*: and thought it an high honour to inscribe the title upon the pedestals of their statues.

‡ He also tells us, that the nobility of *Crete* studied this art, (even those of the royal family) and thought it their glory to excel in it.

the earth, allow himself to lead the dance in a religious procession, a little before his death, (*Cyropæd.* l. viii.) if dancing were an indecency? Would *Socrates*, confessedly the wisest and best man of all antiquity, practise and praise it, in his advanced years; and *Plato*, the greatest philosopher, write precepts concerning it, (*de republ.* l. v.) and celebrate its great importance towards forming the manners to virtue, if the practice were in itself either indecent, unwise, or unvirtuous? Would so wise and so grave a people as the *Romans* endure it, in one of the most solemn ceremonials of their religion? Would so great a philosopher, and so good a man, as *Plutarch*, place this science under the direction of the *Muses*, insinuating the advantages derived to mankind, from having their unruly passions restrained, and rightly directed by apposite dancing, music, and song (*Symp.* l. ix. c. 14.); and elsewhere (c. 15.) lament, that dancing had undergone the fate of *Ibycus*, who, by some guilt against the gods, received now no honour but from men; adding, that it had now allied itself to mean music, and fallen from that divine poetry to which it was once associated; by which means it reigned now only in the theatres among the many, but lost all honour with wise and excellent men? Is this the judgment of all the wiser and most virtuous antients upon the point; and shall the supercilious sneers of a few conceited, superficial moderns, weigh down all these authorities and examples? Are we to take the measures of fit  
and

and just, from our own conceit and ignorance, from our prejudices, usages, and manners, especially in climes so different, and ages and countries so remote, from the practices we reprehend? Let me be allowed at least to doubt, whether a little less arrogance, and more modesty, might not better become us.

LET Mr. *Bayle* then, and his whole tribe of minute admirers and followers, accuse and revile *David*, for praising God in the dance; and let the wisdom of *Egypt*, the South, and the East, acquit him! Let *Apollo*, and *Hercules*, *Castor* and *Pollux*, *Minerva* and the *Muses*, justify and applaud him! Let \*\*, and \*\*\*, and \*\*\*, (names with which I shall not, in indulgence to my vanity, adorn this work) satirize him; and *Museus*, and (if the reader thinks fit) *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Simonides*, and *Pindar*, celebrate him! Let *Cyrus*, and *Leonidas*, *Cleomenes*, and *Scipio* the elder, support him! Let *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, *Sirabo*, (and even *Lucian*) vindicate and revere him! And, what is infinitely above all these put together, let the GOD of heaven command and accept him!

LET me be indulged to conclude this chapter with two short observations.

THE first is, that the institution of the *Salii*, or priests of *Mars*, among the *Romans*, was (as I humbly apprehend) derived from the *Jewish* priesthood.

THE *Jewish* high-priest wore a brodered coat; a tunic of gold, and blue, and purple,  
and



and scarlet; a girdle, and a breast-plate: the *Roman Salii*, who had also their *præsul* or president, wore a belt, a breast-plate, and a painted coat, or a coat of many colours\*, (the ground of which was purple) and a robe of state †. The *Roman Salii* (mixed with young girls, called *Salian virgins*)-danced, and sung verses, as *Livy* assures us, (*lib. i.*) in their processions, in honour of *Mars*, the god of war: The *Jewish* priests danced, and sung verses, in their processions, in honour of the *Lord of Hosts*; and maids and matrons joined in the chorus, Now, the *Lord of hosts*, in the phraseology of the *Jews*, is most certainly *Mars*, in the style of the Heathen.

THE next observation is this, that the joy and festivity, enjoined the *Jews* in their religious solemnities, gave a most noble and distinguished pre-eminence to the ceremonials of GOD'S appointment, to his peculiar people, above those of the deluded Heathen round about them. Whilst the priests of *Baal* were crying, and cutting their flesh, in honour of their idols; the priests of the true GOD were in high enjoyment of their being, and singing Hallelujahs to their Maker? Whilst the wretched worshippers of *Thammuz* were weeping the death ‡, and

\* *Tunica picta* — *versicolor*.

† *Trabea*.

‡ *Plutarch* tells us, that when some persons from *Thebes* asked *Lycurgus's* opinion about the sacrifices and lamentations which they had instituted in honour of *Leucothea*, he answered; *If you think her a goddess, do not lament; if a woman, do not sacrifice to her as a goddess.* Plut. Lacon. Apophthegms.

whining,

whining, in doleful strains, the lewd adulterous love, of their fabled divinity; the maidens and matrons of *Israel* were dancing, playing upon psalteries and timbrels, and singing songs of joy and thanksgiving, to the GOD of life, and the pure Fountain of love! Whilst the servile *Saturnine* adorers of *Moloch* were ruthlessly sacrificing their own issue, their sons and daughters\*, to that monster of cruelty, and knew no other music than to drown their dying cries †; the sons and daughters of *Israel* were pouring out their praises to the GOD of mercy, upon the trumpet, the cornet, the loud cymbal, the well-tuned cymbal, warbling them upon the harp, the lute, and the lyre, breathing them from the tuneful voice, and *rejoicing in the dance*. — Blessed disparity, pre-eminence worthy the GOD of mercy and truth, and Fountain of felicity ‡!

\* *Jerem.* vii. 31. xix. 4, 5. *2 Kings* iii. 27.

† That this was the practice of the parents, who stood by, on these occasions, *Plutarch* informs us, in his treatise upon superstition.

‡ If it be asked, Whether this encomium upon dancing be intended as an argument for introducing that exercise into the worship of GOD? (as one very judicious reader of this work in manuscript apprehended it might) I answer, that my only view was to defend a practice appointed by GOD to a particular people; and at a particular time; and, it may be, now omitted, under the christian œconomy, with equal wisdom.

*E N D* of BOOK II.







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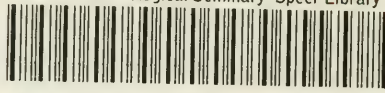
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